

TOP STORY: *Eastern Europe's new anti-Semitism*

March 8-21, 1993

In THESE TIMES

the alternative newsmagazine

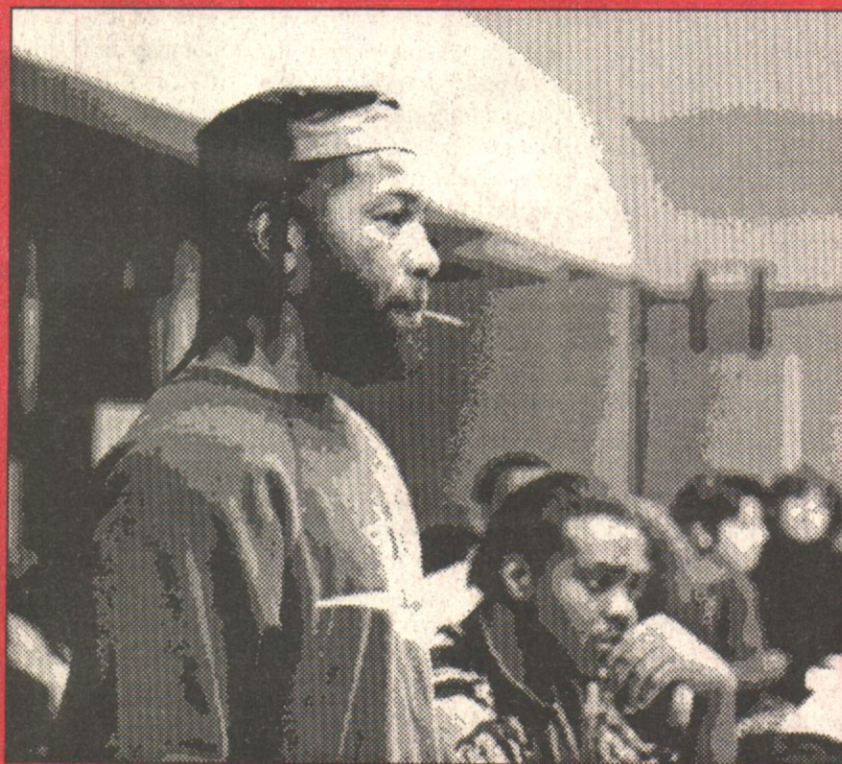
*"I feel sad
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WELFARE, FAREWELL



*A Milwaukee group creates a
working model for reform*

Robin Epstein reports

EDITORIAL

CLINTON'S MODEST STEP TOWARD A NEW AMERICA

When President Clinton presented his "vision of change in America" to Congress and the American people, he began a reversal of government priorities that can only accelerate in the years ahead. There were things to cheer in his state of the union address. Clinton clearly hopes to end the alarming rise in inequality of the Reagan-Bush years by using government as an instrument of humane social policy. He believes that "no one in America who works should have to raise a family in poverty." He promised to provide a comprehensive plan for health care reform that will get costs under control and provide universal coverage. He proposed additional cuts in military spending, most notably in money for Star Wars research and development, and he would use the money saved to create jobs by rebuilding highways, airports and mass transit, and to redirect research from the military to private industry.

Clinton also wants to reverse the extremely regressive Reagan-Bush tax policies, not only by increasing taxes on those with high incomes, but also with a five-year, \$27 billion increase in the federal tax credit for working families with children.

All this was presented as part of a program that is designed to achieve "a higher rate of economic growth, improved productivity, higher wages, more high quality jobs and an improved competitive position in the global economy." But Clinton's emphasis on education and job training as a means of reducing unemployment conflicts with his emphasis on research and investment to increase productivity. And the goal of a more humane society may well conflict with the desire to compete for dominance in the global economy.

Consider the following. As companies improve their technology and refine their work processes, they require fewer workers to produce larger amounts of goods. The current recession was caused in part by productivity gains of corporations striving to improve their international competitiveness. In the '80s, the largest firms reduced payrolls by 3.7

million workers, a 21 percent drop. With this process only partially underway, manufacturing employment accounts for only 18 percent of the workforce, and as technology is further developed jobs in the service sector will also be cut at increasingly high rates.

Education, technical and otherwise, is in itself a desirable thing. But technical education will not solve the employment problem, especially as we move from a militarized economy to one that focuses on human needs. Arms manufacturers employ a disproportionate number of engineers and other highly educated technical workers. Economist Ann Markusen estimates that 69 percent of aerospace engineers depend on military or space budgets for their jobs, as do half the oceanographers, a third of physicists and astronomers,

and 31 percent of electronic and electrical engineers. She predicts that by the year 2001, 4 million of these jobs will be lost through cuts in military spending. Even now, these people are a drag on the job market.

Then, too, in order to become competitive, many major corporations are turning away from full-time employment and moving toward reliance on contract, or temporary, workers who don't receive health benefits or vacation pay. This is true not only for relatively low-skilled office workers, but also for highly skilled engineers. These workers are what *Chicago Tribune* writer William Neikirk calls the "human equivalent of just-in-time production, where parts arrive in a factory only as they're needed." With no large permanent worker "inventory" to worry about, Neikirk writes, "firms believe they're more efficient."

The global competition that has led to these rapid changes in the work process and the ability to produce increasingly large amounts of goods with fewer and fewer workers is one of the real virtues of capitalism. This was true in the first half of this century, when we saw the agricultural workforce decline from 50 percent of all those gainfully employed to less than 3 percent, even as output expanded greatly. In the first half of the next century, as productivity gains achieve the same rate as they did in agriculture, we will see the same happen in the manufacturing sector.

But as that happens, work as we now know it will become a part-time activity for most Americans. If we become able to produce all our material needs with a tiny percentage of our population, we will have to decide how we want the necessary work to be done. And we will have to invest heavily in the types of work that are socially desirable and labor-intensive: teaching, cultural activity, participation sports, travel.

As president, Clinton cannot now address such things. But if he carries out his program of rapid technological change and continues to seek ways to guarantee comfortable, meaningful lives for all Americans, it won't be long before these issues are high on the agenda. ◀

IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"

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(ISSN 0160-5992)

Published 26 times a year by Institute for Public Affairs,
 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647, (312) 772-
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 Times* are available from University Microfilms
 International, Ann Arbor, MI. Selected articles are
 available on 4-track cassette from Freedom Ideas
 International, 640 Bayside, Detroit, MI 48217. All rights
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 Alternative Press Index and the Left Index. Publisher
 does not assume liability for unsolicited manuscripts or
 material. Manuscripts or material unaccompanied by
 stamped, self-addressed envelope will not be returned.
 All correspondence should be sent to: *In These Times*,
 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647.
 Subscriptions are \$34.95 a year (\$59 for institutions;
 \$61.95 Canada; \$75.95 overseas). For customer service
 and to place subscription orders, call toll free: (800) 827-
 0270. Advertising rates sent on request. Available back
 issues are \$5 each; specify volume and number. All
 letters received by *In These Times* become property of
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 condensed form. Second-class postage paid at Chicago,
 IL and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send
 address changes to *In These Times*, 1912 Debs Ave., Mt.
 Morris, IL 61054.

This issue (Vol. 17, No. 8) published March 8, 1993, for
 newsstand sales March 8 - 21, 1993.



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LETTERS

Defending wilderness

Phyllis Eckhaus, in "Wild women, wild men" (ITT, Feb. 8), sums up the views of the authors of *Women Respond to the Men's Movement* by saying the movement is "hostile to women, paralyzingly apolitical and ultimately close to fascist in its reverence for authority." She goes on to challenge Robert Bly's premise that men feel ashamed at being men, saying instead that "they are ashamed of not being male enough—strong enough, tough enough."

Wrong. Male striving for machismo is simply a compensation for male weakness and loss of confidence, for male shame. Isn't this one of the more insightful lessons about men that came

with the women's movement? Has Eckhaus forgotten?

I was once part of a men's group in the late '70s, about the same time I began to subscribe to *In These Times*. We got together then to discuss our feminist perspective and the significance of the women's movement. Today I get together with men for a different reason: to discuss the meaning of manhood, to plan strategy to defend wilderness ... to be warriors. Of course, I get together with women to do this too, but these women are not threatened by the men's movement.

Enough of the tired, old left. Ironically, and contrary to what Eckhaus implies, change must be as much personal as political.

Don Smith
Missoula, Mont.

Strong men, strong women

When I read the review of *Women Respond to the Men's Movement* (ITT, Feb. 8), I felt much the same as when I read the book itself: sad and angry. My involvement in the men's movement for 10 years has had a profound and positive influence on my relationships with men and women; and it has motivated me to become more involved in cultural-change projects.

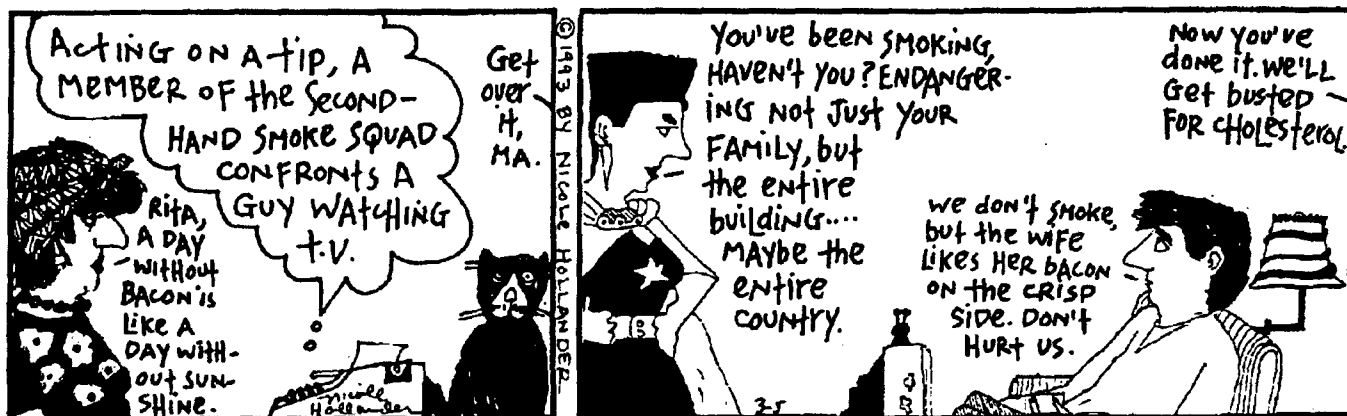
I have known hundreds of men who have had the same positive results. Our involvement in men's groups and retreats comes from our understanding that currently accepted models of men's behavior just don't work. We need a ground-up revisioning and reimagining of how men are treated and how we hurt and oppress others.

I feel sad when I read critical feminist literature because it seems so mistrusting of the intentions of men; men are bonding together because we are sick to death (literally) of male roles and male privileges: these cause us to be jailed, commit suicide and become addicted far more often than women.

These women's views of what men want to accomplish seem utterly at odds with the desires of men I know: a world where strong men and women support each other to have more hon-

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander



est relationships, and in which we can collaborate in the healing of the planet as equal partners.

To the criticism that the men's movement is inward-looking, I say, "How else are we going to change the attitudes and behaviors that have helped create the world around us?"

George Taylor
Mill Valley, Calif.

Nearly fascist

I greatly appreciated the evocative use of metaphor and the clever puns in "Wild women, wild men" (*ITT*, Feb. 8). Let me hasten to add, those are the only things I appreciated about it. While the popularity of Robert Bly may deserve scrutiny, the negative value Phyllis Eckhaus assigns to all men's gatherings is as "oppressive" and "nearly fascist" as the perceived conspiracy.

For 20 years I have studied with a Native American elder (a woman), and for the past 10 I have participated in and organized a men's council under her guidance, not some "opportunistic ... Jung Frankenstein." We use drums on occasion, sit in a circle, and we always defer to our elders, men who have traveled many miles to share the knowledge and wisdom of their culture. We don't plot against women; we voice our gratitude for them.

By implication, Eckhaus equates self-awareness with self-centeredness and organizing principles with supremacist propaganda. She apparently considers the "good faith of men" an oxymoron and the abuse of power an exclusively male trait.

Not everyone who seeks to connect with the past presumes a "pre-industrial utopia." Neither should we assume that the contemporary industrial culture is unquestionably superior to all that has gone before. As Maya Angelou pointed out so forcefully in her inaugural poem, "There is a true yearning to respond to/ The singing River and the wise Rock."

While the article itself was reac-

tionary, the collage that accompanied it was just plain stupid and sleazy. Your readers, male and female, deserve more credit.

Chris Benton
Fredonia, N.Y.

Galvanizing the powerless

As a longtime Marxist sympathetic to the men's movement, and one who published a favorable review of Robert Bly's *Iron John*, I grow increasingly angry and impatient with feminist male-bashing. Phyllis Eckhaus' review (*ITT*, Feb. 8) is the latest vicious and counterproductive example.

One would think from so much of the feminist literature that all women were poor, put-upon innocents constantly at the mercy of treacherous male hands, feet and whatever else. I readily acknowledge oppression of women; but oppression curdles more than it ennobles, and a good part of the men's movement lies in making ourselves manly yet caring beings in a world of imperfect yet self-righteous women.

Consider these crucial women in my life. There was my mother, who succored me in private against my hypercritical and verbally abusive father (I lived in fear that he would hit me), but who always switched sides and sided with my father against me in a showdown. There were the young women of my high school years who constantly laughed at me and called me ugly to my face, making me ashamed of my appearance and humiliated in the presence of women. There were the supposedly liberated women of the counterculture and left movements in the '60s through the '80s who mocked me as "unhip" because of my nervous, sexually repressed demeanor. And there was the wretched excuse for a psychotherapist who would've undoubtedly called herself a feminist if asked. (She was also wretched to a good female friend of mine.) These women were part of the problem and

not part of the solution, being in good measure why I had to seek psychotherapeutic help.

So many feminists, of which Eckhaus is apparently one, want to believe that all men are equal in the benefits of patriarchy, that patriarchy is an across-the-board system of domination of all men over all women. But patriarchy is actually a system of differential power, status and class relations among men as well, with pyramidal hierarchies that leave most men powerless and without money at the bottom. The potential of a politicized men's movement is to galvanize the powerless many to come to grips with true manhood instead of a perniciously ersatz macho substitute.

George Fish
Indianapolis

Costly prayers

Char Miller's piece, "God forbid" (*ITT*, Feb. 8) was amusing, especially to those of us old enough to remember the obligatory Bible readings at school assemblies even in the "progressive, liberal" city of New York.

What is not so funny, however, is the fact that we citizens are paying big bucks for prayer at the opening of each session of Congress. According to *Government Racket* by Martin Gross, the House chaplain gets a salary of \$115,300, and his counterpart at the Senate has a total budget of \$300,000!

These costly prayers don't seem to have improved the ethics or behavior of the members of those august bodies.

God forbid, indeed!

Lucy S. Smith
Dinwiddie, Va.

Editor's note: Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we may have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you wished to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.

InSHORT



Nelson Hancock

NEW LIFE

Changing gypsy stereotypes in the Czech Republic.

words, it was a typical Gypsy community, the kind of place that reinforced the anti-Gypsy stereotypes of many white Eastern Europeans. But this community of 2,000 has begun to transform itself with an urban

Until recently, the north Bohemian town of Chanov in the Czech Republic was a squalid, brooding ghetto deformed by years of poverty, official neglect and internal violence. In other



By Woody Igou

Runway to heaven

The country's largest tobacco marketers are spending \$300 million this year to convince consumers to collect proof-of-purchase coupons to buy T-shirts, belts and other fashion items. A spokesman for the "Marlboro Adventure Team" describing a pullover sweater stated, "You won't want to take it off, ever."

Until you will it to Dr. Kevorkian.

Teaching the four R's

Several students of a Roman Catholic high school were punished for cheering during a rape scene in a play based upon the life of silent movie star Stepin Fetchit. The students were from Cretin-Derham Hall High School.

No comment.

Loosen his turban

As hundreds of thousands of Iranians, carrying the tired old "Death to America" posters, marked the 14th anniversary of the rise of the Ayatollah

Khomeini to power, President Rafsanjani told the crowd that "Western analysts must reassess their attitude about Iran, don't label us fun-

mentalist or terrorist."
 "We'll have you killed."

Godzilla's spawn

Wired magazine reports that Japan's sterile computer society has generated a new software-addicted breed of nihilistic techno-nerds called "Otaku." While one self-professed Otaku killed four girls and sent their teeth to the victim's families, most are afraid of sex with other people.



Because of this, Japanese programmers are furiously designing sex software and other "object"-oriented sex aids for the confused Otaku.

I guess we're lucky we only have couch potatoes.

Power=Rolodex abuse²

The New York Times reports that infrequently employed Hollywood actress Carol Ann Francis successfully created a powerful false persona—



haughty English-accented agent Ann Hollingswood. Ms. Hollingswood—exclusively through the use of pushy, demanding telephone calls—became well known and well connected with studio heads and others, all without having an office or ever having to "do lunch." Next call: Get Jane Seymour for the miniseries, now!

APPALL-O-METER SCALE

1. Weightless banality
2. Green Acres stupid
3. Malicious cretinism
4. Howard Sternesque
5. Mary Matalin mean
6. Gangrenous venality
7. A touch of evil
8. A cancer in the Zeitgeist
9. Ho tu, Pol Pot?
10. Horseperson of the Apocalypse

renewal program that is changing the attitudes of local Czechs toward their Gypsy neighbors.

Easily distinguished from most Czechs by their dark skin, Hindi-based language and unique culture, the republic's 400,000 Gypsies, or Romanies, as they are more politely known, have generally been segregated from and despised by white society ever since they migrated to this area from India in the 10th century. In the Czech Republic, as in many former East bloc countries, the new freedoms that have come with the fall of communism have allowed anti-Gypsy sentiment to flourish. Since the 1989 revolution, Romanies have increasingly found themselves openly banned from many restaurants and other public places, and are frequently the targets of attacks by racist skinheads. A survey early last year found that 90 percent of the Czech population says they feel "hostility" toward Romanies.

Such attitudes explain in part why Chanov became a de facto Romany ghetto in 1978. That was the year the Czechoslovakian government forced many residents of the north Bohemian mining town of Most to relocate so that authorities could demolish large parts of the historic city in order to get at the rich coal deposits beneath it. The Romanies living in Most were moved out en masse to the freshly constructed "housing estate" of Chanov nearby. Largely shut out of jobs, isolated from Czech society and neglected by government officials, the community sank into poverty and was plagued by internal violence.

Today, however, Chanov looks more like a nascent suburban subdivision than a slum. Construction crews are busily repairing smashed windows and holes in the graffiti-spattered walls of the dozen-odd *panelaks*—the grim concrete apartment blocks built by the old communist regime—that constitute the community's housing. The battered streets and courtyards, once strewn with garbage, are now lined with rows of neat orange trash cans. The bars that used to guard many apartment windows have all been removed, testimony to confidence in the new police force. All local Romanies, the police stroll about in khaki uniforms, keeping an unobtrusive eye on the heavily tattooed young men idling on doorsteps.

The driving force behind this community development project is Janov Farkas, a millionaire Romany businessman and political leader from the Slovak town of Banska Bystrica. Farkas has launched several such upgrading campaigns in Romany settlements around the Czech Republic.

Perhaps the most important benefit of Chanov's restoration campaign is the effect it is having on the attitudes of many Czechs in Most. Both sides agree that the spectacle of a Gypsy community remaking itself into a clean, safe place is helping break down negative stereotypes. "The attitude of the whites is changing—they have a better impression of us now," says Kveta Vaskova, head of the Chanov Women's Association.

Nonetheless, eventual integration between the communities seems unlikely—mainly because, at present, neither side wants it. "In the beginning, we thought it would be better for Gypsies to live among 'normal' people," says Frantisek Bina, Most's deputy mayor in charge of Romany issues. "But after long studies, we have decided it's better for them to live in their own community; it's better for the town as well."

—Vince Beiser

FLIGHT CANCELED

A Michigan judge halts GM from fleeing Ypsilanti.

Ypsilanti, Mich., plant to Arlington, Texas. The judge ruled that after nearly two decades of offering GM a total of \$1.3 billion in tax abatements, Ypsilanti officials were justified in believing that their actions would keep the facility in the area.

"There would have been a gross inequity and patent unfairness if General Motors, having lulled the people of the Ypsilanti area into giving up millions of tax dollars which they so desperately need to educate their children and provide basic governmental services, is allowed to simply decide that it will desert 4,500 workers and their families because it thinks it can make these same cars a little cheaper somewhere else," Shelton wrote.

Shelton chided the state of Michigan for failing to make clear the contractual obligations of companies that receive tax breaks. A few communities now have "clawback" provisions to recover money and damages if companies given aid shut down. The judge also wisely and angrily observed that if the nation seeks a new cooperative relation between government and business, pitting states against each other in tax-break wars is a wasteful, counterproductive policy.

GM, which pressured many communities into giving tax breaks in recent years, may face a spate of similar suits as it now tries to downsize. Many other corporations—including those that attempt to take advantage of the proposed North American Free Trade Agreement by shifting operations to Mexico—may also be hit with such suits. Nearly 90 percent of new U.S. plants and half of all expansions got some form of public assistance in the "candy store '80s," according to estimates of Greg LeRoy of the Midwest Center for Labor Research.

Ultimately federal action will be needed to end the subsidies to capital mobility. (Clinton's proposed economic plan at least phases out the tax subsidy that has lured many pharmaceutical companies to Puerto Rico, replacing it with a more justifiable wage credit.) Judge Shelton's reasoning would not apply to all plant shutdowns, but his decision may spur other communities to challenge corporate flight.

—David Moberg

D-DAY FOR SALLIE MAE

The student loan program may be on its last legs.

profit. A group of lawmakers, led by Sen. Paul Simon (D-IL), are working on legislation that would eliminate Sallie Mae and let government handle the student loan business directly. According to a General Accounting Office report last fall, having the government do it would save \$1.8 billion a year. (See *In These Times*, Dec. 14, 1992.)

When Secretary of Education Richard Riley testified at his Senate confirmation hearing in January, he equivocated on whether the administration was

Communities and workers betrayed by major plant closings may take heart in a decision issued by Michigan Circuit Court Judge Donald Shelton in early February. Shelton enjoined General Motors from shifting production from an

Ypsilanti, Mich., plant to Arlington, Texas. The judge ruled that after nearly two decades of offering GM a total of \$1.3 billion in tax abatements, Ypsilanti officials were justified in believing that their actions would keep the facility in the area.

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—David Moberg

For two months, lobbyists for Sallie Mae (the Student Loan Marketing Association) have been fighting to preserve their lucrative institution, which buys up federally guaranteed loans from banks and then collects them—at enormous

profit. A group of lawmakers, led by Sen. Paul Simon (D-IL), are working on legislation that would eliminate Sallie Mae and let government handle the student loan business directly. According to a General Accounting Office report last fall, having the government do it would save \$1.8 billion a year. (See *In These Times*, Dec. 14, 1992.)

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MEDIA BEAT

By Pat Aufderheide

Kidz 'n the law

It now looks like broadcasters may actually have to obey a 1990 law mandating better children's television. Ever since television got widespread enough to create tempting demographics in every time segment except Saturday morning, kids have been the last audience served. After an epic struggle, Congress finally passed a better-than-nothing law three years ago, dictating that all broadcasters must air educational and information programs for children, limit their advertising time and avoid running ads for items shilled in programming during the programming itself.

The law has finally gone into effect, and amazingly enough, the new Federal Communications Commission (FCC)—even without a Clinton appointee to head it yet—is holding up some license renewals until stations can demonstrate that they have actually served children. (Listing action cartoons such as *GI Joe* as educational wasn't persuasive—especially after the Center for Media Education exposed the practice.) Not only that, Congress is backstopping the FCC, with key aides sternly promising oversight hearings.

Call your stations to find out what exciting initiatives for educational and informational programming they're planning, and how community members can help.

Meanwhile the National Captioning Institute has discovered how to turn any

program, even home shopping, into educational programming: caption it, making it a literacy experience.

And in this corner...

Broadcasters and cablers have been at each other's throats as long as both have been around. Recently cable operators hired world-renowned social scientist George Gerbner to document the amount of violence in programming—hoping that the numbers would show that their overall programming was less violent than that of broadcasters.

Well, yes and no. It turns out, according to Gerbner's research, that adult cable programs are more violent, but cable children's programs are less violent than those on broadcast (which depends heavily on violence-rich cartoons).

They oughta know

Advertising and marketing pros are deeply suspicious of in-school ads on television—the kind on Chris Whittle's widely used Channel One TV. In a recent study by the Roper Organization and *Advertising Age*, interviewers asked both ad pros and consumers about their personal reactions to advertising in a variety of media. The pros in general were more irritated than the general public at ads in many places (movie theaters, videotapes, grocery carts). Their hostility to TV ads in classrooms was almost two and a half times as great as the general public. Consumers didn't support such ads more than the pros; they just had many more "no opinions." Listen to the experts.

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committed to eliminating Sallie Mae. The next day, upon the advice of a PaineWebber analyst, Sallie Mae's stock jumped five points to 74 3/4, and PaineWebber predicted that it would soon break 80.

But Sallie Mae's euphoria proved short-lived. In Clinton's economic proposal, the president declared his intention to expand the current pilot program with the goal of "replacing guaranteed lending ... with direct loans in 1997." The next day Sallie Mae's stock plummeted to 47 1/4. It's a good bet now that its stock will eventually fall to zero.

—John B. Judis

CMDR. CRUEL

Suit alleges fired Chicago cop tortured a 13-year-old.

The Chicago Police Board last month fired a controversial commander for his role in torturing an accused cop killer 11 years ago. But Cmdr. Jon Burge—who has been implicated in more than 40 cases of

torture over a period of 13 years—still faces a civil lawsuit stemming from a different case in which he allegedly beat and tortured a 13-year-old murder suspect.

According to Flint Taylor of the People's Law Office, the legal firm which represents the boy and publicized the previous torture allegations, Burge's officers also electroshocked the adolescent suspect. The suit charges that officers under Burge's command held the youth for 24 hours in an adult facility, would not allow visits from either his mother or an attorney and did not transfer custody to a youth officer.

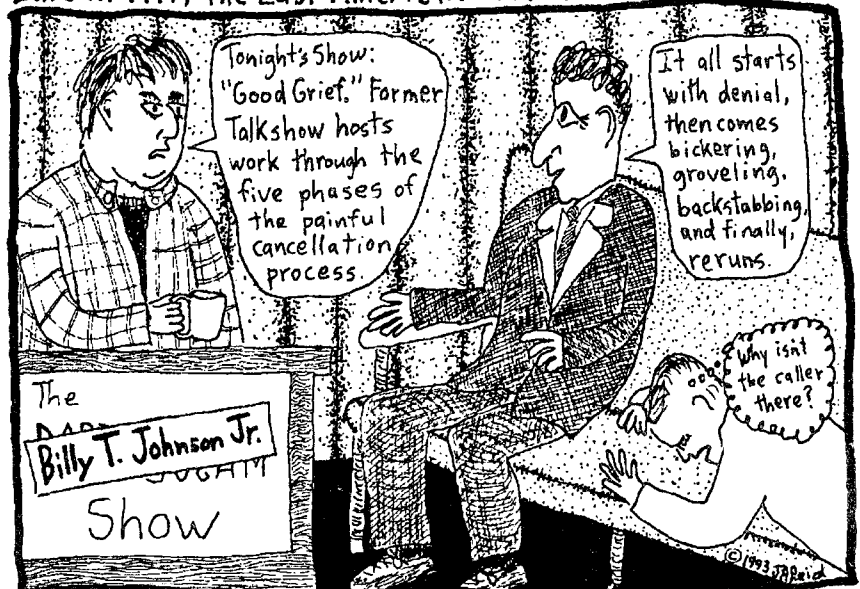
Leroy Martin, the city's former police superintendent, is also named in the suit for allegedly suppressing a report that confirmed a history of torture in Burge's unit. The unit's record was so heinous and well documented it prompted Amnesty International to urge that the Chicago Police Department be investigated by human rights monitors for torturing criminal suspects.

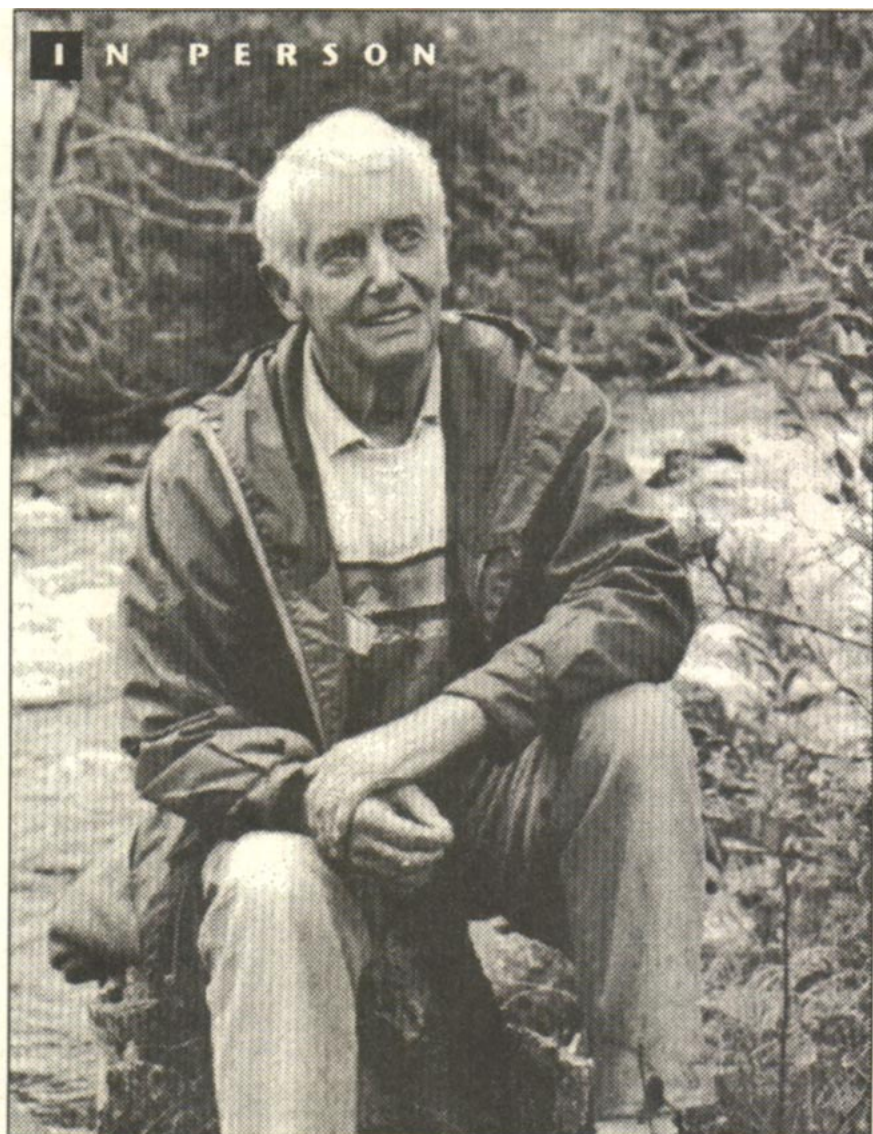
—Salim Muwakkil

ROUGH CUTS

J.A. Reid

Late in 1997, the Last American Gets His Own Talk Show





WASTED EARTH, DAMAGED BRAINS

Environmentalist David Brower sends a message.

When David Brower prepares his taxes he lists everything as a business expense. So far the IRS has not asked questions. "I'm self-employed," explains Brower. "I'm saving the Earth."

His work is his life. When he retires, Brower says he will settle down in his hometown of Berkeley, Calif., and take up his boyhood passion for butterfly collecting—this time not with a net but a video camera. Retirement, however, is down the road. The Earth is not yet saved, and Brower, who turns 81 this year, has work to do.

"Our conventional wisdom is badly outdated," Brower said on a recent visit to Chicago. "It was built on a planet that seemed limitless. But we know for a fact that the Earth isn't and we better face that fact soon."

Brower has spent the last 40 plus years playing a leading role in national environmental organizations, including, among others, the Sierra Club and Friends of the Earth, though he was forced out of both. He admits to some mistakes at each organization, but he doesn't count his uncompromising stands on environmental issues among them. "My heresy becomes old hat

ETC.

By Miles Harvey

Domestic agenda

Do you have a Zoë Baird problem? In other words, have you hired a babysitter, gardener or other household worker and not paid his or her Social Security taxes? You are required to pay Social Security taxes for any domestic worker who earned more than \$50 a calendar quarter, but, according to the IRS, only about one in four people did so in 1991. And those who obey the law report that filling the necessary paperwork is about as easy as reducing the federal deficit. For law-breakers and law-abiders alike, Rep. Dan Rostenkowski is coming to the rescue. In January he introduced legislation that would allow taxpayers to file forms for household workers once a year and would raise the threshold from \$50 a quarter to \$300 annually. In addition, if you owe taxes for a worker, you could increase your Social Security withholding tax on your own paycheck. Not surprisingly, a Rostenkowski staffer says this bill has strong support on Capitol Hill.

Bewitched

Do you have a Hillary Clinton problem? If you're an educated and moderately successful woman, you've probably experienced the gynophobia that is transforming the president's wife into what the *American Spectator* called "the Lady Macbeth of Little Rock." In an insightful exploration of this phenomenon, *Village Voice* writer Patricia J. Williams argues that "as

long as educated women confine their educated insights to the hearthside or maybe a few volunteer civic enterprises ... they will maintain their claim to femininity. Woe Betide, however, the woman who insists on getting paid for all that brainpower. ... For all our pretensions to equality ... how is it that even in this, the Year of the Woman, fewer women were elected to the U.S. Senate than to the Iranian parliament?"

Home free on option three

Do you have a Lawrence Walsh problem? Let's hope not. In addition to George Bush's fly-by-night pardons of Caspar Weinberger and other Iran-contra figures, the beleaguered independent counsel has had to endure countless personal attacks. In a recent speech to the American Bar Association in Boston, however, Walsh offered a blunt defense of his prosecutions in the Iran-contra scandal. "It is a crime to lie to a congressional committee," he said. "We are not talking about corridor conversations between executive branch officers and congressmen or telephone chats—we are talking about a response to inquiries of Congress through the appropriate committee and in accordance with the procedures of the committee. Under these circumstances, there are only three types of response available to the executive: 1) tell the truth; 2) claim privilege; or 3) lie. The third option is a crime. It has been so designated by statute for a very long time."

pretty fast," he says.

In 1982 Brower founded Earth Island Institute to provide an alternative to mainstream environmental thinking. He writes in his memoir *For Earth's Sake* that he conceived of the institute as "a harbor for people with ideas about ships that might not meet conventional-wisdom port requirements"—a place that would embody the philosophy summed up in one of his favorite quotations: "A ship in harbor is safe, but that is not what ships are built for."

A couple weeks ago, Brower set sail against the prevailing inanities and wrote a letter to Bill Clinton. He posted it via a full-page ad in the *New York Times*. In that letter, Brower took up where Clinton left off in his inaugural address when he observed that we are "borrowing the Earth from our children." Brower pointed out to the president that in the past 20 years, human progress has displaced enough fertile soil—"drowned under reservoirs, paved under highways, covered by suburbs, contaminated with chemicals, eroded by wind and water"—to equal all the cropland of India. Further, in those same 20 years, enough of the Earth's forests have been destroyed to cover the U.S. east of the Mississippi, from Canada to the Gulf.

Brower argues that if we continue to consume the Earth at this rate, our children will not have a future. Anyone can figure that out—if they have half a brain. The problem, as Brower sees it, is that people in decision-making positions don't. "Economics is a form of brain damage," says Brower. His clear blue eyes are not laughing. That quote, another favorite, is from futurist Hazel Henderson. According to Brower, conventional economists make two crucial mistakes. First, they view the Earth's resources as being provided free of charge. Second, they don't take the future into account.

Brower advocates factoring into every economic equation what he calls "replacement pricing." For example, instead of dressing ourselves in petrochemical synthetics, like polyester, Brower argues that we should wear clothes made from renewable natural fibers. In a replacement pricing system, what we pay for our cotton would include the environmental cost of producing that material. Says Brower, "You'd pay enough for your cotton so that it subsidizes the proper growing of cotton."

Making the move from buying a cotton sweat shirt for \$24 to buying one for \$24 + \$X for environmental replacement requires a major shift in the gears of production, which in turn must be preceded by a shift in thinking.

To that end, Brower, in his *New York Times* advertisement, announced the Global Restoration Fair of 1995, a world's fair in San Francisco that will celebrate the restoration "of the Earth, of society and of ourselves." Says Brower, "It is healing time on Earth, and it is time to restore and help nature heal the damage we've done and go to work ourselves on our failing human institutions."

He believes the Earth would be saved a little bit faster if the national media would stop "confusing cynicism with objectivity." Says Brower, "The media is one of the worst of the environmental threats. It is an indentured media, subservient to advertisers—and advertisers don't like honest reporting."

In every organization he has led, Brower has stressed the importance of providing an alternative perspective on environmental news. The *Earth Island Journal* chronicles the looming catastrophe, but also reports on work that is being done around the world to save the planet.

Despite the situation, Brower celebrates the natural world. Our job, he says, is "to concentrate on biological diversity and saving what wilderness is left."

—Joel Bleifuss

THE FIRST STONE

FOR THE RECORD

By Joel Bleifuss

Are you sick of the October Surprise? I am. Nonetheless, I am devoting one more column to the affair. Then I will drop the subject—until the next time my sense of outrage compels me to bring it up once again.

Last year the House of Representative's October Surprise Task Force examined allegations that the 1980 Reagan-Bush campaign conspired with Iranian officials to delay the release of the hostages held in Iran. The Task Force report, released in January, concluded there was no credible evidence of such a conspiracy. That report now stands as the official verdict on the alleged Republican skulduggery.

But as I reported in my last two columns, the Task Force report, rather than providing the final word, raises questions about the integrity of the investigation itself. Since the report has been ignored by the establishment press, I will continue to try to set the record straight and point out a few more flaws in the House investigation.

The release of the report was carefully orchestrated. First, the Task Force announced that it would hold a press conference on January 13 and release its report. On the morning of January 13—hours before the report was released—the *New York Times*, the *Associated Press* and the *Washington Times* hit the streets with the news that the Task Force had concluded that there was nothing to the allegations. These news stories were based on the report's "Executive Summary," which someone on the Task Force had leaked. And when the Task Force finally released its 968-page report, it did so at the end of its press conference, thereby preventing reporters from asking informed questions about the report itself. Case closed? Well, not quite.

One question that did get asked came from Washington reporter Jack Colhoun, of the no-longer-published political newsweekly *The Guardian*. Colhoun asked Task Force chief counsel Larry Barcella if there was a conflict of interest

between his role as chief investigator and his one-time employment as a lawyer for the international money laundering institution BCCI. Barcella and his law firm were paid \$2.159 million to represent BCCI, which in 1983 had financed arms deals to Iran.

Colhoun's question was prescient. BCCI is not mentioned once in the report. The Task Force ignored the fact that just days after William Casey was named to head Ronald Reagan's CIA, BCCI officials, along with John Shaheen (a close friend of Casey) and Iranian banker Cyrus Hashemi, established two Hong Kong-based banks underwritten by \$20 million in Iranian royal family assets. (See "The First Stone," Feb. 22.)

Barcella responded to Colhoun's question by accusing him of McCarthy-like behavior.

In their report, Task Force investigators repeat the same fabrications that Steven Emerson and Jesse Furman committed to print in their November 18, 1991, *New Republic* cover story titled, "What October Surprise?" In his story, Emerson portrayed the October Surprise as "a conspiracy theory run wild" and attempted to bury the matter by discrediting those who have raised the allegations. (See *In These Times*, Nov. 27, 1991.)

One example of how the Task Force manipulated evidence is the report's treatment of former Israeli intelligence officer Ari Ben-Menashe, who has claimed knowledge of the October Surprise. Ben-Menashe has a history of lying to journalists—including me—and to congressional investigators. His every word is to be doubted. (Of course, the same can be said for a host of people associated with the 1980 Reagan-Bush campaign.) But in the context of the Task Force report, the significance of Ben-Menashe is not so much what he has alleged or its veracity, but how the Task Force treats—or mistreats—him as a source.

Like Emerson, the Task Force investigators discount Ben-Menashe's claims. The Task Force didn't reach this conclusion on its own. Since the Israeli government prohibited the Task Force from entering the country, they relied on Israel to do the investigating for them. According to Israel, Ben-Menashe is a total fraud. In accepting this conclusion, the Task Force ignored contradictory evidence, presented in a July 7, 1992, *Village Voice* article by Craig Unger that quoted Moshe Hebrony, chief of staff of Israel's military intelligence, as saying, "Ben-Menashe served directly under me. He worked for the foreign flow desk in external relations; he had access to very, very sensitive material."

In addition to the unquestioning acceptance of the Israeli position on Ben-Menashe, the Task Force avoided probing the history of his involvement in the October Surprise allegations. In doing so, the Task Force borrowed a page from

Emerson—literally. In his *New Republic* article, Emerson described Ben-Menashe as “an October Surprise source who only surfaced in 1990. ... Like others before him, Ben-Menashe’s recall of the October Surprise came about belatedly after he was arrested in 1989 [for attempting to sell U.S. military equipment to Iran].” The Task Force put it this way: “The chronology of Ben-Menashe’s allegations about contacts between the 1980 Reagan campaign and representatives of the Iranian government provides additional grounds for impeaching his credibility.” The Task Force observed that, “according to the records made available to the Task Force by several journalists, Ben-Menashe began making October Surprise allegations following his contact with several journalists and arms dealers who ... had themselves begun to claim an indirect role in the October Surprise conspiracy.”

These claims by Emerson and the Task Force investigators are fabrications, clear and simple. In 1986, prior to Ben-Menashe’s 1989 arrest, Rajai Samghabadi, a *Time* magazine correspondent, used Ben-Menashe as a source in compiling articles about the October Surprise and Iran-contra that were never published. This fact is attested to by Bruce Van Voorst, a CIA agent in the '50s who is now a Washington-based senior correspondent for *Time*. In 1979, Van Voorst hired Iranian-born Samghabadi to report for *Time* in Iran.

Samghabadi testified in Ben-Menashe’s 1989 trial. The following exchange took place with Ben-Menashe’s attorney Tom Dunn, as is recorded on pages 1,464 and 1,465 of the court record.

Dunn: “Could you please tell the court and the jury what was the purpose of the meeting in September of 1986 at the Algonquin Hotel between you and Mr. Ben-Menashe?”

Samghabadi: “Mr. Ben-Menashe consistently tried to get a story in print purporting, claiming, saying that as of 1980 there was a huge conspiracy between the United States government and Israel to supply Iran with billions of dollars in weapons off the books, without legal channels knowing anything about them, and it was still continuing at the time he talked to me. ...”

Dunn: “Specifically, though, in 1986, in September, did Mr. Ben-Menashe question you about why this had yet to go into print?”

Samghabadi: “He was extremely perturbed that, despite highly specific information, *Time* editors refused to run that story. And I explained to him that a

story with such a huge accusation would have to rely on more than a single unnamed source.”

Samghabadi told me that he also had another source with knowledge of the October Surprise, a current “cabinet-level official” in Iran who “has an account of everything that went down.”

In a November 1991 interview with *In These Times*, Emerson insisted that he had fully read this trial manuscript. And he stuck by his claim in the *New Republic* that “Ben-Menashe’s recall of the October Surprise came about belatedly.” When questioned about the court transcript, Emerson told me, “There is something wrong with what you’ve got.”

The Task Force investigators failed to contact Samghabadi or Van Voorst. They apparently felt much more comfortable probing the delusions of Gunther Russbacher, an inmate of the Missouri prison system who claims to have flown George Bush, Jennifer Fitzgerald and a host of other characters to Paris on October 19, 1980. The Task Force report devotes a chunk of space to Russbacher, a man who has a criminal record that includes impersonating law enforcement officers, military personnel and federal officials and whose background contains “a number of psychological adjudications.” In other words, Russbacher was the kind of October Surprise witness the Task Force liked. ◀

THE ADVENTURES OF A HUGE MOUTH

by Peter Hannan



THE ECONOMY

Clinton's great leap forward

D

uring his transition and first weeks in office, Bill Clinton repeated every error that the Democratic Party made during the last two decades—from focusing on social rather than economic issues to aligning the party with Wall Street rather than Main Street. But in the course of one week the new president righted himself.

His economic program, which he announced during his state of the union address, may not pull the country out of its doldrums, but it is the boldest attempt to do so since Reagan's misguided tax cuts of 1981. While the Clinton program contains the usual loopholes, loose-ends and sleights-of-hand, it sets the following important precedents for addressing the country's economic ills.

Government matters: In his inaugural address in January 1981, Ronald Reagan pledged to remove government from economic life.

Clinton brings it back—albeit chastened by a decade of conservative criticisms. Clinton's approach is a compendium of the innovative plans, schemes and proposals that liberals have discussed and debated for two decades for making American industry more competitive, reducing environmental pollution and alleviating the unemployment and culture of poverty that afflicts cities and some rural areas.

The president's economic program targets high-technology and energy efficiency. For instance, his proposal for the Department of Transportation—traditionally hostage to energy-inefficient autos, trucks and airplanes—funds AMTRAK, the national passenger railroad that the Reagan and Bush administrations tried to eliminate, and sub-

sidizes development of new high-speed trains. The budget for the Department of Energy proposes funds for renewable fuels and eliminates money for nuclear reactors.

Clinton's social program is a blend of traditional liberal job subsidies and neo-liberal market incentives. With an eye on the Los Angeles riots, Clinton proposes funding 700,000 summer jobs for teenagers. But he also pledges to increase the earned-income tax credit (EIC), which provides a tax credit for low-income workers both in order to raise them out of poverty and to encourage them to work rather than to stay on welfare. (See story on page 17.) And he again signalled his commitment to devising a program that will limit welfare to two years for those able to work.

If you combine Clinton's yet-to-be-announced health insurance and welfare programs (both of which will radically expand public sector intervention) with his fledgling industrial policies, what you have is an attempt to replace the old military-industrial complex with a new social-environmental industrial complex overseen by the government. While Clinton has yet to fill in many of the details, it is a compelling vision of America's future course.

The deficit matters: Reagan and Bush both claimed that they wanted to balance the budget, but the deficit increased dramatically under them and now totals a record 5.4 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). Meanwhile, many liberal Democrats simultaneously argued that the deficit didn't matter or provided needed incentives for investment. The Republicans were wrong in practice and the Democrats were wrong in theory.

The president's economic program sets important precedents for addressing the country's economic ills.

By John B. Judis
WASHINGTON D.C.



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Annual deficits may have had a beneficial effect 30 years ago when the U.S. enjoyed unchallenged industrial superiority, but they now force up real interest rates, threaten the value of the dollar and put the average American in hock to wealthy foreign and domestic creditors. And deficits don't have the same positive effect either. They are as likely to fund purchases of imports and to increase the country's trade deficit, particularly at a time when trade rivals such as Japan are holding down their own spending and restricting domestic demand.

Clinton is the first president since Dwight Eisenhower to take the deficit seriously and propose spending cuts and tax increases that have a chance of reducing it. As a Democrat working with a Democratic Congress, he is also in a unique position to get his way.

Fairness matters: The Reagan and Bush administrations tilted their fiscal policy toward upper-income Americans—giving the wealthy generous tax cuts and eliminating social programs aimed at the poor. Clinton's program makes an earnest effort to reverse these priorities.

He proposes increasing corporate tax rates and the tax rates on individuals making over \$1 million a year and eliminating subsidies for farmers who make more than \$100,000 in non-farm income. He also supports eliminating the tax deduction companies take for executive salaries over \$1 million, although it is rumored that he will not rule out exempting performance bonuses. He reduces the tax deduction on business entertainment, eliminates the deduction on lobbying expenses and increases the user fees for corporate jets. Not all these measures will raise significant revenue, but together they put the Democrats back on the side of Main Street.

The president's proposed energy tax would disproportionately affect lower-income Americans, but he has combined it with a sharp increase in the EIC. Moreover, the energy tax has merit in itself as a way of raising revenue and promoting energy efficiency.

Bill Clinton's economic program is a step in the left direction.

Taken as a whole, Clinton's program is far superior to the recent budgets that Bush submitted or the Democrats in Congress eventually passed. However, it has some very serious weaknesses. Clinton probably should have proposed cutting more from defense. (Does the U.S. really need 100,000 troops permanently stationed in Western Europe?) And he should have eliminated additional tax subsidies for the rich, such as the mortgage deduction on second homes. More important, Clinton's program rests on accounting gimmicks that throw into question both his commitment to expanding social programs and to cutting the deficit.

In his state of the union address, Clinton sounded as if he planned to do everything at once. But a careful reading of the White House's detailed 145-page plan provides some unpleasant surprises. He has front-loaded his tax increases and spending cuts and back-loaded or postponed many of his most ambitious social and economic initiatives. Many of them are only slated to be funded during his fourth year (fiscal year 1997) or even later.

Take Clinton's program for national service, which would allow every American to pay off his or her college loans in exchange for two years of public service. The president singled it out for praise in his speech. "In the future," he told Congress, "historians who got their education through the national service will look back on you and thank you for giving America a new lease on life if you meet this challenge." But this year the president is asking for \$15

million to run pilot programs and only proposes fully funding it at \$3.4 billion in 1997.

Many of Clinton's social programs are equally insubstantial on paper. He promises to fund fully Head Start, but according to his plan that won't occur until 1999. He promises full funding for WIC, the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children, but \$1 billion of the \$2.6 billion is slated for 1997. He promises \$716 million in low-income housing subsidies, \$422 million of which will be delivered in 1997.

Even his proposals for industrial policy are back-loaded. Most of the funding for high-speed rail, research into short-haul aircraft, university-based science and engineering research, defense conversion, and non-defense work at the National Labs is slated for 1997. But by 1996, when all these proposals would come up for funding, Congress may not want to pay the bills.

The president's deficit plan makes it even more likely these programs will never see the light of day. In his speech, he claimed to be setting the deficit on a sure downward trajectory. His figures, however, show the deficit as a percentage of GDP dropping from 5.4 percent in 1993 to 2.7 percent in 1997, but then beginning to rise to 3.2 percent in 1998, exactly when Clinton's programs would begin to take hold. In 1996, the president and Congress would therefore face the difficult choice of fully funding his initiatives or holding down increases in the deficit.

His program also casts a shadow over his proposal for offering universal health insurance. In January, while testifying before the Senate Finance Committee, Donna Shalala, Clinton's secretary of Health and Human Services, claimed that the administration would use the savings from cuts in Medicare and in Medicaid to subsidize universal health insurance, yet in his budget proposal, Clinton uses these savings to reduce his deficit projections. Where, then, will Clinton get the \$50 plus billion needed to provide universal coverage? Clearly, he will either have to propose new taxes or postpone extending coverage.

Hampered by these kind of ambiguities and uncertainties, Clinton's program could get picked apart in Congress and end up no better than the lame 1990 budget agreement reached between the Bush administration and Congress. Republicans have already indicated that they will oppose Clinton's plan simply because it proposes new taxes. The Republicans—once a party of responsible business opinion—have become tribunes for the selfish rich.

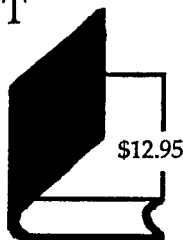
The looming question is whether Clinton can maintain the support of Southern Democratic senators like Sam Nunn of Georgia and John Breaux of Louisiana. These self-described moderates deserted Clinton in January when he championed the rights of gays in the military, but they may heed the call of party and conscience when it comes to sticking up for the president's economic program. They would be wise to recognize that if Clinton's program is eviscerated, then Democrats may not get another chance to govern until well into the 21st century. ◀

THE BOOK WOMEN ARE TALKING ABOUT

*I lost my mother a year ago
No book has moved me as much*
— Dorothy Allison

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COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

Workfair

A Milwaukee group is out to end the welfare system — but not without economic justice.

By Robin Epstein
MILWAUKEE

If Bill Clinton is serious about his vow to “end welfare as we know it,” he should check out a Milwaukee group called Congress for a Working America (CFWA). Those active in CFWA would stress to Clinton that small-scale tinkering with the welfare system is bound to fail, and that to end welfare he has to address the needs of the working poor as well as the unemployed. They would also tell him the labor market has deficiencies that an upturn in the economy won’t solve: there simply aren’t enough jobs, and many existing jobs don’t pay a living wage.

But CFWA is far from being all talk. The group has launched an ambitious, three-year, \$18 million project designed as a national model—not only for ending welfare as we know it, but for ending *poverty* as we know it. The New Hope Project is innovative in two

ways. Unlike welfare-reform efforts geared solely for people on public assistance, the employment program is open to both welfare recipients and the working poor. In addition, the project bolsters its participants’ chances of success in the workplace by providing health care, child care, wage supplements and a community service job if they can’t find a private or public-sector position.

“I see New Hope as economic support to fill in the gaps between what the regular economy has to offer and what the minimum offer should be,” says Julie Kerksick, a CFWA founder and New Hope’s associate director. “We try to help people stabilize in the labor market so they can pull things together over the long term.”

New Hope is the culmination of CFWA’s years of hands-on experience with the daunting issues of unemployment and underemployment. The group’s white, baby-boomer founders started the organization in 1979 with their sights set on national legislation guaranteeing full employment. While many

of CFWA’s 16 staff members—now a culturally diverse group—still espouse that dream, they don’t kid themselves that it’s going to be politically feasible any time soon. Instead, they’re working, catch-as-catch-can, to help Milwaukee’s poor learn to act on their own behalf.

CFWA is like the product in a famous *Saturday Night Live* commercial parody: “It’s a dessert topping and a floor wax!” CFWA is an organizing group and a service provider. It’s an advocacy group and a think tank. It’s even a therapy group. Quirky, realistic and non-ideological, CFWA doesn’t worry about how it’s characterized. Everything it does—from helping recovering addicts write résumés to lobbying state legislators—flows from a single premise: unless all Americans have jobs that provide them with dignity and pay above the poverty level, the country cannot begin to address its other social problems.

CFWA’s corner of the world is a city of 600,000 with a 40 percent minority population, a declining industrial base and one of the country’s largest income gaps between blacks and whites. In January 1992, there were 54,164 people out of work in Milwaukee—but only 4,284 jobs available, according to a recent study.

Faced with such realities, the group is willing to try anything to help the poor get and keep stable jobs. CFWA estimates that as many as 50,000 Milwaukeeans have found work as a direct or indirect result of the group’s efforts.

CFWA has evolved over time, adapting its strategies to challenge various structural barriers to employment. The group often learns about such barriers from low-income job-seekers themselves, thanks to a network of “job task forces” that meet weekly in church basements and community centers throughout the city. Task force leaders



©1993 Robin Epstein

Ex-con Emery Davis is starting his own business with the help of CFWA.

Milwaukeeans' frustrations and breakthroughs in trying to get a foothold in the workforce.

These insights often lead to action. For example, CFWA organizers discovered that temp agencies often hinder workers from landing real jobs by charging companies sizeable fees for hiring temp workers on a permanent basis. So CFWA started its own temp agency. Inner-city residents also told CFWA they couldn't apply for job openings in the suburbs because they would have no way of getting to work. In response, the group got a public transportation program going that helps low-income workers make the reverse commute.

CFWA also helps job-seekers overcome emotional barriers to employment. Communication and leadership workshops serve both as skills-training sessions and group therapy. "Political and economic liberation will not happen without personal transformation," says John Gardner, CFWA's organizing guru. "It's not a question of which comes first. It's yin and yang."

Using theater exercises, CFWA also teaches low-income people how to play the various "roles" required of them when they interact with social workers, parole officers, prospective employers and the like.

Emery Davis, a self-employed handyman CFWA is helping start his own lead-abatement business, swears by the

announce job openings, publicize CFWA services and encourage participants to talk about their experiences. In the process, the group gains insights about poor

group's workshops and says he'll insist the four employees he plans to hire go through them. "They've helped me communicate with people who have negative, sarcastic attitudes," says Davis, an ex-convict who spent 20 years in prison for armed robbery and attempted murder. "Before, I would have used profane language. I would have invited them outside, regardless the size. I'm learning to be more diplomatic in order to be effective."

The group is also strongly committed to involving welfare recipients and the working poor in changing public policy. Those who thrive in CFWA's introductory workshops and show a talent for recruiting others and raising money are ushered into "democratic organizing" workshops. There they are encouraged to act as leaders for problem-solving in their own communities. Within days of arriving at CFWA's office, job-seekers may find themselves giving testimony at City Hall or at the State Capitol in Madison.

"People don't walk in the door saying they want to be community organizers. They say, 'I really want a job,'" explains CFWA's executive director Chris Crawley. "Once we show them they can get a job, they're amazed by it—and they're able to operate at a different level. We teach them to go after making the world the way they want it."

Getting people who are directly affected by unemployment and underemployment involved in politics not only boosts their confidence and skills. It also brings their immediate needs to the fore.

"It's powerful to have people who have been harmed, especially people of color, up there in front of white, middle-class policy-makers saying, 'I don't want to go back on welfare. I want to work,'" says David Riemer, a CFWA

founder and board member who is currently a top aide to Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist. "Someone like me comes in to do back-up, to answer technical questions, but that's not what moves [politicians]," Riemer says. "We speak to them in two languages."

This technique worked well in CFWA's successful 1989 campaign in the Wisconsin Legislature for a statewide earned-income tax credit (EIC), which encourages breadwinners for poor families to stay on the job. This program supplements the federal EIC. Families with three children can get up to \$1,038 extra per year from the state EIC on top of approximately \$2,000 from the federal EIC. Only a handful of states have EICs, and, due to CFWA's urging, Wisconsin is the only one that ties the tax credit to family size.

The EIC's broad political support is a good example of how CFWA's theme—work—appeals to people across the political spectrum. "Everyone is for work. People really believe in it—liberals, conservatives, the poor and the middle class," says Riemer. "Work is essential, and unlike other essential things like self-interest or power or sex, work doesn't have frightening connotations."

In the process of breaking down the paradigm of welfare dependency, CFWA has also broken down some political and organizational paradigms. "CFWA brings together unlikely partners to work for change," says Crawley. Half of CFWA's board members are low-income and half are professional. Many of the staff members came to CFWA when they were on welfare or stuck in dead-end jobs. They volunteered untold hours, gained new skills and did fundraising for their own jobs.

CFWA has always worked with community groups, religious congregations, unions and government agencies, but in recent years the group added a new strand to its composition—one that's highly unusual for a group with its roots. Despite misgivings of some of the staff, in 1987 CFWA began forging alliances with the city's business elite, including some former enemies. They made these overtures with the goal of getting their ambitious New Hope Project—now technically independent of the CFWA—off the ground.

Those risky efforts have paid off so far. The Greater Milwaukee Committee—an association of corporate movers and shakers that includes supporters of George Bush and of Wisconsin's Republican governor, Tommy Thompson—played a key role in the New Hope Project. With the committee's weight thrown into the battle, the state legislature passed a bill allocating \$1 million to the project in June 1991. New Hope organizers also anticipate that President Clinton will sign an omnibus federal spending bill that could provide the project with an additional \$6 million.

New Hope's designers have sought government support because they reasoned that no project—no matter how successful—would be embraced by policy-makers unless they participated in its creation. In addition, private foundations conditioned their funding on the project's ability to get public sector endorsement.

However, the status of New Hope's state funding remains fuzzy. Gov. Thompson signed the bill that included New Hope's allocation, but used his veto power to cut the \$1 million approved by the legislature down to \$500,000. But New Hope has yet to see a penny of that money. Thompson objects to some of the New Hope's proposed wage supplements, which he regards as too generous. The wage supplements are designed to offset taxes that would in essence penalize participants who get salary raises. New Hope's staff is negotiating with the governor's representatives to find a solution both parties can live with.

Until now, New Hope has been able to draw diverse compatriots into their cause by focusing on the common ground. "People on welfare, business people, Jane Q. Public and politicians all don't like welfare," Kerkisick says. "We fit into the fabric of the political debate as it stands now. But discussing welfare inexorably leads to a bigger agenda."

New Hope and CFWA have forced Wisconsin decision-makers to think about more than reducing entitlements. Supporting New Hope means policy-makers are beginning to recognize the systemic pressures that hold poor people below the poverty level, sliding between underemployment and unemployment. That realization could be their first step toward acknowledging government and industry have a long-term responsibility to compensate for society's lack of economic democracy. ◀

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TRANSPORTATION

Airport '93

Anyone interested in what kind of president Bill Clinton is shaping up to be might take a look at his new secretary of transportation, Federico Peña.

This disaster blockbuster was written and directed by Federico Peña, Clinton's secretary of transportation.

By Daniel Lazare

Like Clinton and Al Gore, the former Denver mayor seems environmentally sensitive, enjoys backing from various greenish groups and, all in all, appears to represent a departure from the pave-paradise mentality of the Reagan-Bush era. But Peña's eight-year record as mayor also shows him to be a pragmatic politician who knows how to mouth all the right environmental phrases, yet, when push comes to shove, opts for wasteful, business-as-usual transportation and energy policies.

Take the gleaming new Denver International Airport, slated to open this coming October. It's a project Peña conceived, fought for and guided through most of its planning and

construction. At 53 square miles, the airport is huge—twice the size of Manhattan. At \$3.1 billion, it ranks as one of the nation's costliest public works projects in years. It's a tribute to Peña's ambition and to Denver's go-go economic attitude. At the same time, it's also a monument to inept planning and faulty economic projections.

What's wrong with the project? For one thing, it may not even be necessary. The facility was conceived during Denver's real-estate and savings-and-loan boom in the mid-'80s, when air travel in and out of the city was increasing by as much as 16 percent a year, causing delays at the old Stapleton airport. Since then, however, Denver's economy has cooled and travel has fallen off. Air traffic is now down more than 10 percent from the 1986 peak. Delays have diminished as well.

Stapleton is a scant seven miles from downtown. But its successor is 27 miles out in the boondocks, a \$40 taxi ride away or, at today's mileage rates, a gallon and a half of gasoline. The only major road connection, a four-lane highway aptly named Federico Peña Boulevard, is too small for the volume of traffic likely to be generated. While a rail link is under discussion, it's not likely to advance beyond the talking stage for years.

Dismal as this sounds, things look even worse from the point of view of air quality and local development patterns. By locating the airport so far out, the city has opened up a major new development zone and set the stage for renewed sprawl. The upshot could be a shift in development toward the northeast and away from Denver's already-beleaguered downtown. Suburban sprawl breeds traffic the way a swamp breeds mosquitoes—part of the reason auto travel in the area is expected to double by the year 2010, according to the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF).

The result: more congestion and more pollution as Denver reinvents itself as an endless, sprawling Los Angeles-by-the-Rockies. "The sum total of Peña's efforts," says Bob Yuhnke, an EDF transportation consultant in nearby Boulder, "may be to leave Denver worse off" than when he took office in 1983. Denver might have wound up healthier, wealthier and more efficient if Peña had never spent a penny on the airport.

This is quite an indictment of the man now in charge of air, sea and land travel for the entire United States. It's not to say, though, that Peña is a highway-loving, environment-hating Bushie in Democratic clothing. The reality is more complex. According to Yuhnke and other Colorado environmentalists, Peña showed an impressive grasp of environmental issues as mayor. And, unlike his predecessors, he recognized—or appeared to recognize—that, rather than alleviating congestion, more roads and parking lots foster it by encouraging auto dependence.



Peña talks a good game, but his record is questionable.

As a pragmatic politician, however, he had a certain game to play and a certain political-economic milieu in which to operate. As mayor, he found himself in charge of a city already notorious for polluted air, chaotic growth patterns and gargantuan energy consumption. According to a study by Australian academics Peter Newman and Jeffrey Kenworthy, by 1980—three years before Peña's election—Denver had the one of the highest rates of gasoline consumption among U.S. cities. Denver soaked up 8 percent more gas per capita than smog-bound Los Angeles, 17 percent more than Boston and 32 percent more than Chicago.

As a pragmatic politician, however, he had a certain game to play and a certain political-economic milieu in which to operate. As mayor, he found himself in charge of

into the city water supply, Peña stonewalled. He refused to respond to the group's letters or send a representative to their meetings. A tainted water supply, after all, could have put a damper on any real-estate boom.

Peña's appointment is indicative of the contradictions tearing at the Democrats as highway builders butt heads with green-tinged mass transit advocates, economic growth advocates lock horns with sado-monetarist deficit cutters, and so on. How it all sorts itself out is anybody's guess.

One thing is certain, though. Although promising to recuse himself from matters having to do with Denver's new airport, Peña can be expected to do everything in his power to see that his pet project doesn't come a cropper. After all, it wouldn't do to allow one's mayoral legacy to go belly up. ◀

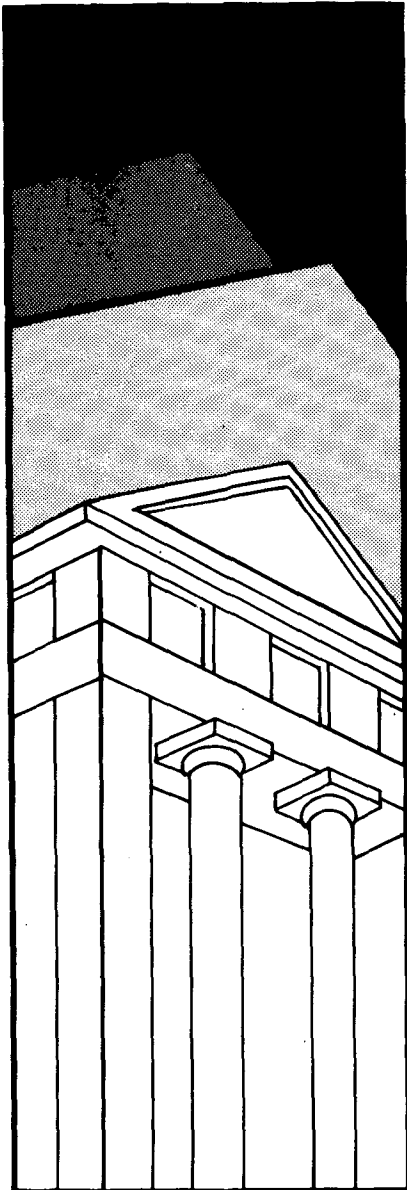
This extreme auto dependence was apparent to anyone who drove through the city. Except for one touristy area downtown, pedestrians were rare, street life was all but nonexistent, parking lots and shopping malls were everywhere. And the city was perpetually shrouded by an acrid haze that local residents label "the brown cloud."

As mayor, Peña pushed for piecemeal environmental reforms such as tighter auto emissions standards. He also lobbied (albeit unsuccessfully) the state legislature for stepped-up mass transit funding, invested \$3 million in bikeways and pedestrian facilities and even placed a partial ban on wood-burning fireplaces in order to improve air quality.

At the same time, however, he cheered on oil drillers, real-estate barons and savings-and-loan operators who were creating some of the headiest times in Denver since the 1859 gold rush. In keeping with the downtown's emerging post-industrial role as a financial, service and entertainment center, he built a convention center and baseball stadium and managed to lure an amusement park downtown as well. He offered real-estate mogul Marvin Davis some \$45 million in tax breaks to build a lavish, upscale shopping mall on the city's periphery, even though the city was already suffering from a glut of retail space.

And when Adrienne Anderson, a regional environmental leader, complained about poisons flowing from a weapons and missile assembly site

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L A B O R

Digging out

Faced with corporate antagonism and declining membership, the United Mine Workers union is trying an innovative new approach.

By David Moberg

Coal miners now walking picket lines are engaged in a unique strike. They are trying to extract from their employers information that they need for an ambitious effort to ensure job security. Their union, the United Mine Workers (UMW), is also fighting for a new way of working in the coal fields that will foster labor-management cooperation while giving workers more power on the job and a meaningful voice in a wide range of traditionally managerial decisions.

Negotiations had not even begun over the coal industry contract when the union, on February 2, struck Peabody Coal, the biggest and one of the most hard-line coal companies, over an unfair labor practice—the refusal to bargain. Miners are demanding information that the big

coal companies of the Bituminous Coal Operators' Association (BCOA), a multi-employer bargaining group, refuse to give. The UMW needs the information—which concerns, for example, exactly what mines are owned by whom—to negotiate meaningfully.

Job security is paramount for union miners. Coal prices have been depressed in recent years, but the output of coal is up and productivity has doubled since 1979. Employment has plummeted by 42 percent over the same period, but many of the big coal companies are quite profitable. The UMW represents a little over half of the 115,000 non-management coal workers.

The average union miner is now in his or her mid-40s and works in a mine that will be exhausted in about seven years, according to union President Richard Trumka. "The faster you mine, the faster you're unemployed," Trumka told *In These Times*. "If the companies want strides in productivity, then productivity cannot be seen as the enemy of our members. We want the companies—whenever they create jobs in the future, regardless of where they create the job or

what entity they put it under—to hire our laid-off or active members before they go to the street."

Increasingly, coal is dominated by structurally complex conglomerates or holding companies—at times with literally hundreds of separate entities—that maintain both union and non-union mines. These companies will often open their new mines under a different legal entity in order to avoid hiring union miners and abiding by the union contract. Although the last industry-wide contract supposedly provided miners priority rights to jobs in new operations, the companies met within weeks of signing the agreement in 1988 to figure out how to sidestep compliance. Companies also avoid hiring union miners by subcontracting to small, often dangerous, non-union firms.

Peabody's corporate maze typifies the structural puzzles the UMW faces in its organizing efforts. Peabody Holding Company—which owns both Peabody Coal and Eastern Associated, the targets of the UMW walkout—is itself owned by a strongly anti-union British conglomerate, Hanson PLC. Holding this enigmatic association to a contract is nearly impossible. For example, Peabody Holding Company recently announced the opening of a new mine in Indiana under a company front that had not signed the union contract. And Peabody is not alone. Among big BCOA companies like Consol, Zeigler and Arch, 30 to 40 percent of operations are non-union. With unemployment rampant and employer hostility high, organizing of such new, non-union mines is difficult.

"They want to hide precisely what they're doing so we



Mineworkers in Boone County, W.Va., walk the pickets in an ongoing strike against Peabody Coal.

cannot negotiate effectively," Trumka said. "We're not willing to negotiate blind or based on trust they'll honor the agreement. They've demonstrated they'll do everything they can to avoid providing a secure future." Trumka needs ownership information to establish the highest level of corporate control and to negotiate contracts with those most inclusive owners.

The union's attempt to restrain coal-company juggling of land holdings goes beyond traditional wage issues to "a major philosophical struggle that gets to the question of property rights," argues West Virginia Institute of Technology professor of economics and labor John David. The union is breaking new ground for the labor movement by tackling the tough issue of how corporations arrange their internal structure.

Yet not all coal companies feel threatened by the union demands. Last fall the union began negotiating separately with the four companies—employing about 7,000 of the industry's 60,000 union miners—that comprise the Independent Bituminous Coal Bargaining Alliance (IBCBA). These companies were willing to provide information the union requested. Drummond Company President H. Douglas Dahl said the IBCBA is interested in a "novel approach to negotiating" that would establish a "progressive ... team approach" in the industry. The union extended its expired contract with the independents and still hopes BCOA will agree to its offers of a contract extension.

Negotiations with the independents are built around an

sions affecting the work they do and the product they produce. It's called empowerment."

Trumka said he admires the German "works councils," worker committees with significant decision-making powers that have been mandated by law since shortly after World War II. But he explicitly rejects typical U.S. labor-management cooperation, often referred to as "quality-of-worklife" (QWL) programs. These QWL initiatives often consist of informal workplace meetings initiated by management to improve quality and productivity. They are sometimes used to circumvent or avoid unions, and they rarely give workers much power. As Trumka argued in another speech last year, "For the team to work, the system must guarantee equal power for both management and workers."

"Yes, you work cooperatively together," he told *In These Times*. "You help the company become more efficient. But you also make decisions. Should we invest in the mine or give money to the shareholders? Do we open up this coal field? Those are decisions workers should be involved in. I envision workers having a real say in their workplace."

If Trumka can negotiate a new democratic workplace with real power for workers and job security in exchange for continued high productivity growth and labor peace, he may be able to split the industry. While offering the olive branch to employers who will share power, the UMW is demonstrating at Peabody that it is willing and able to fight recalcitrant employers with time-honored solidarity, minus the violence that often confused issues and alienated the public in past strikes.

Last fall, Congress passed legislation intended to guarantee health benefits for all current retirees, thus removing one

understanding, Trumka said, "that for us to have more cooperation and worker empowerment, they have to openly provide for the future of our members. I've never been in negotiations like this before. They're really problem-solving exercises. If the program is a success, those companies will be doing very well, and the rest of the industry won't have any choice but to follow."

In his inaugural address last December after winning re-election as president, Trumka committed the union to fight "for a new kind of workplace, a workplace where men and women are valued for their skills and their judgment, for their ideas and for their ability to make choices and deci-

of the toughest bargaining issues facing the industry and giving retired miners unique health care security among union workers. Health care for future retirees and active workers, however, will still be a contentious issue in this year's contract. Anticipating problems, the UMW was instrumental in the recent introduction of legislation in West Virginia to establish a comprehensive health insurance program with a single, state agency as insurer on the Canadian model.

Despite its declining numbers, the

mineworkers—in fighting for a strongly democratic, unionized form of workplace cooperation—may be giving new direction to the labor movement, which has been deeply divided over the inadequate kinds of workplace teamwork now common in U.S. industry. If successful, they may also provide a partial model for labor law reform under a Clinton administration. Yet it may still take a long, grueling effort by the miners to stake out that new direction. ◀



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B L A C K P O W E R

Talking 'bout
my generation

T

he ascension to power of those born during the post-World War II baby boom has sparked an explosion of interest about the tumultuous era in which they came of age. Not only has this sudden boomer hegemony whet a public appetite for '60s nostalgia, it is also evoking some '60s behavior. Bell bottoms and LSD are back; pop musicians again are penning paeans to marijuana. Bob Dylan and other members of the '60s rock pantheon played to appreciative crowds during the inaugural events that the *New York Times* dubbed "The Boomers Ball."

Since I am part of this new leadership generation—the president and I are the same age!—those inaugural rituals also put me in a reminiscing mood. I remembered the hopeful feelings of that era, although many issues divided white and black activists during those fabled times.

There are subtle signs that '60s-style engagement is making a comeback.

By Salim Muwakkil

As I watched the integrated celebrants in D.C., I felt a tinge of déjà vu and wondered if any of those issues had been resolved.

For many boomers, the '60s recall a time of countercultural experimentation and leftist romanticism. African-American boomers are heirs to another '60s phenomenon: the Black Power movement. In 1965, the same year that Bob Dylan's *Highway 61 Revisited* album lit the fuse for a cultural explosion within white America, the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) began expelling white members from its ranks.

Black nationalism was on the rise, and by 1966 militants like Stokely Carmichael and H. Rap Brown had taken over SNCC and begun dominating the imagery of the civil rights movement. On the West Coast, Huey Newton and Bobby Seale were raising hell with a group they started called the Black Panther Party, and Ron Karenga's US organization was developing the "Kawaida" doctrine of cultural nationalism. Nationalists

centered in Chicago, Newark and Brooklyn were churning out agitprop in various literary guises. Manifestos denouncing "white boy" art while celebrating a separate black aesthetic, *de rigueur* for any self-respecting black intellectual, were produced with surprising regularity.

That highly charged era produced a cacophony of activist voices, some of which were shrill and illogical. But ideas were passionately discussed virtually everywhere African-Americans gathered. The problems that gave rise to that angry, bustling movement are still around; some say conditions are even worse. These days, however, it's easy to find frustrated black organizers who bemoan what they say is a pervasive sense of apathy.

But as we move further into the '90s, there are subtle signs (wishful thinking?) that '60s-style engagement is making a comeback. Books from that era, like Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton's 1968 *Black Power*, are once again in demand. What's more, several recently published books that assess the '60s from the perspective of black militance instead of the white counterculture have hit the public square.

I recently wrote about two of them (*Black Power Ideologies* and *A New Day in Babylon*, see *In These Times*, Feb. 22), but there are others that tell a different story about the formative years of black boomers. One of the more compelling accounts of those years is Elaine Brown's *A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story* (Pantheon Books). Brown, who was Newton's significant other, took over sole leadership of the Panthers when its founder fled to Cuba in 1974. Brown's book tells a tale that is fascinating and instructive.

By focusing on her personal saga, Brown gives coherence to that frenetic era. As one who also embraced Panther ideology, I found Brown's well-informed perspective a correc-

Bob Fitch



Black Panther children in Berkeley, Calif., during the height of the movement.

Inset: Huey Newton and David Hilliard.

fills in many blanks.

There were violent disagreements between cultural nationalists (cult-nats) like US and Panthers, who referred to themselves as “revolutionary nationalists,” and police agencies inflamed those tensions as best they could. Cult-nats accused Panthers of using revolutionary rhetoric as a tactic for integrated lovemaking. Panthers disparaged the Afrocentric affectations of the cult-nats as symbolism, as naive as it was impotent. Theorists of the current nationalist revival incorporate rather than dismiss insights gleaned from the Panthers’ rise and fall.

Brown’s dead-on descriptions of the group’s flagrant sexism is one of *A Taste for Power*’s real strengths. Panthers viewed women, first and foremost, as sexual partners and then perhaps as maids and cheerleaders. I remember clearly how this crude phallocentrism was promoted as revolutionary behavior, a shrugging off of bourgeois socialization patterns. I recall using that very language myself during a 1970 discussion with black high school students seeking Panther information. The absurdity of my argument is glaringly clear in retrospect, given the context framed by Brown’s volume.

tive both to hagiographic Panther lore and to demonizing government propaganda. For example, her account of the deadly feud that erupted between the Los Angeles Panthers and Karenga’s US organization

David Hilliard’s account of approximately the same period in *This Side of Glory: The Autobiography of David Hilliard and the Story of the Black Panther Party* (Little, Brown & Co.) provides additional context. Hilliard grew up with Panther co-founders Newton and Seale and was the group’s “chief of staff” from 1967 to 1974. His book chronicles the life of a poverty-scarred youth who latched on to the promise and pretense of a “proletarian party” of revolution.

The interest generated by the stories of these two ex-Panthers has convinced others that they may profit from their stints in the group. Thus a rash of books by ex-Panthers is anticipated.

Both Hilliard and Brown have fond memories of their days of commitment to the cause of black liberation. The swaggering Panthers presented a very attractive image to urban black baby boomers, but they also presented a tempting target for the FBI and its police allies. The Panthers faded—or maybe “were disappeared” is a better verb—after about six years in the media’s glare.

New U.S. Rep. Bobby Rush (D-IL) is the only former Black Panther in Congress. Rush served as the Panthers’ deputy defense minister during the period when Chicago police assassinated Fred Hampton. Like the rest of his Panther comrades in those days, Rush mouthed heartfelt platitudes about the glorious days when the revolution would completely transform this capitalist country. Now Rush is one of President Bill Clinton’s “new Democrats,” and nothing surprises me anymore.

M E X I C O

The circle game

Mexico's electoral system is rotten to the core. Despite maintaining the illusion of democracy, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) government has held on to its one-party rule, by hook or by crook, since 1929. And don't count on Carlos Salinas de Gortari, the current president, to allow truly free elections in 1994, when his six-year term comes to an end.

A president comes into office, vowing reform. He leaves rich and corrupt. The next president comes into office, vowing reform...

By Ilan Stavans

In 1988, at the age of 39, this Harvard graduate came into power in a highly contested vote in which he edged challenger Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. An engineer by training, Cárdenas, the former governor of the state of Michoacán, is the son of a national hero and a populist with huge appeal. He organized the vociferous Frente Democrático Nacional (FDN) before the 1988 election to demand respect for the constitution

and to accuse the PRI of corruption and dictatorship.

When the initial electoral returns came in, mostly negative for Salinas, the computerized vote tabulation system mysteriously broke down. A short while later, Salinas claimed victory. He was inaugurated president with only 50.7 percent of the official national vote. The moment he took office, he promised to revise the electoral code and to invite small parties to participate actively in what appeared to be a new democratic spirit. A good act. A persuasive lie.

With Cárdenas announcing last month that he will again seek the presidency, the 1994 race is already underway. Salinas is barred by law from seeking re-election, and he has not yet selected a successor. But whoever is chosen will have history on his side.

From fiesta to funeral, Mexico's presidential terms always follow the same pattern. With a cast of refreshing faces and an infinite list of engaging promises, the first two years are presented as the remedy to a season of collective misconduct. The new leader,

whose past the media never dares to seriously investigate, is promoted as an honest, well-behaved common man, the owner of a handful of seemingly "uncommon" attributes like patriotism and decency. He is to clean up the mess his precursors left behind by arresting the most renowned bandits and by punishing those that engaged in favor and patronage by abusing power. Corruption, it seems, is to be abolished.

Miguel de la Madrid, for example, in office from 1982 to 1988, began his term by threatening to put in jail his predecessor, José López Portillo, who by the time he stepped down had become one of Latin America's richest men. To show his power, de la Madrid did incarcerate a handful of politicians, such as Jorge Díaz Serrano, once the commander in chief of the national oil industry. He also assured the population that a revision of the national code of ethics was about to begin: *No más mordidas*. Thus, the incoming president establishes his reputation by ridiculing the past and by convincing the population to support his projects for a better future. It matters not that the system has never lived without corruption.

During the second third of the term—the middle two years—promises become policies. A new approach to the economy and foreign policy is established. Things are better simply because they are different. A mirage, of course.

During his third and fourth years, Salinas convinced his people that the long-held tradition of looking south—understanding Mexico as part of the Southern Hemisphere—was not the road to future development. Instead, the country had to look north, to stop approaching *Gringolandia* as the evil empire, to be part of North America by joining forces

with Canada and the United States. His solution was the North American Free Trade Agreement.

True to form, Mexico has been feeling different about itself: confident, self-assured, looking toward a bright future. This sense of closeness to *el coloso del norte* even permeates culture. I was invited to attend last year's Guadalajara International Book Fair, whose theme was "Mexico and the United States: A Dialogue."

I was constantly reminded of Alan Riding's book, *Distant Neighbors*, on the proximity an idiosyncratic gap between the two nations. Writers from both sides of the Rio Grande tried to discuss their own work "through the other's eye." Chicanos were obviously an essential component to the event: true frontier dwellers, they often speak the two languages, Spanish and English, and act as cultural bridges interpreting what is Mexican to the U.S., and vice versa. What was shocking is how close we felt to one another. A sense of partnership prevailed while Salinas' shadow loomed silently in the background. The event as a whole celebrated his hope for re-encounter. Down with stereotypes, down with an ancestral misunderstanding based on truths lost in translation.

And yet, and yet... As Salinas' last two years are about to begin, the pattern of every presidential term is once again apparent. Rumors, whispers, unconfirmed information—the last third of every regime is dominated by a lack of trust and sense of collective uncertainty. First the population hears about a possible coup. Then a photograph is circulated in which the leader's wife is seen buying expensive jewelry in a Paris boutique. Luis Echeverría and José López Portillo, it is a well-known fact, used their regimes' last "third" to empty the banks' reserve, to open accounts in Switzerland and elsewhere in Europe, to build mansions with Roman-style baths—in short, to enjoy an epicurean life.

In the next decade Mexico might turn into another Puer-

to Rico, a commonwealth of sorts where English and U.S.-style individualism is ubiquitous, but surely democracy will still be absent and corruption will prevail. In a couple of recent state elections declared "unclean"

by opposition parties, Salinas supported a PRI candidate who was sworn in to office amid massive protest. Rumors are beginning to circulate.

In one, the president's sister is about to buy the corporation that owns important periodicals like *Artes de Mexico*, a highly respected, profitable pictorial magazine edited by an Octavio Paz acolyte. In another, Salinas himself is using a fictitious name to become the owner of the newspaper *El Nacional* and the government TV channel *Imevisión*, which are mysteriously put up for sale. A third unconfirmed claim portrays Salinas as already extremely wealthy, the owner of huge businesses and industries at home and abroad. The well-orchestrated spirit of uncertainty makes it impossible to prove or disprove these rumors. If experience is to serve as proof, the only thing unquestionable is that the last third of past presidential terms has been disastrous.

Nothing indicates that the pattern will be broken this time. Dishonesty is as healthy as ever in Mexico. Democracy remains an ideal. Which means that Salinas, seen as a doctor four years ago, shall soon be treated as a scoundrel. And his successor, a president once again appointed by the PRI, will be a refreshing redeemer—at least temporarily.

History, Friedrich Nietzsche and the Aztec priests of Tenochtitlán used to say, is a cycle, an eternal return.

History, Friedrich Nietzsche and the Aztec priests of Tenochtitlán used to say, is a cycle, an eternal return.

History, Friedrich Nietzsche and the Aztec priests of Tenochtitlán used to say, is a cycle, an eternal return.

Ilan Stavans, a Mexican novelist and critic living in Manhattan, won the 1992 Latino Literature Prize. His books include *Imagining Columbus: The Literary Voyage* (Twayne) and *Growing up Latino: Memoirs and Stories* (Houghton Mifflin).



E A S T E R N E U R O P E

The new anti-Semitism

Jew-hatred is now directed against an abstract image of "Jewishness," rather than living, flesh-and-blood Jews.

By Paul Hockenos

There are few Jews left in Eastern Europe. Of the 5 million Jews in non-Soviet Eastern Europe on the eve of World War II, only 700,000 survived the war. Today, just over 125,000 Jews remain in the five former Soviet satellites.

But even so, anti-Semitism is alive and flourishing in the region. The new anti-Semitism shares much with that of the past, yet it is not merely a throwback to the traditional religious and racial anti-Semitism of the '20s and '30s.

Today's anti-Semitism doesn't physically threaten the tiny Jewish communities in Eastern Europe. There have been no attempts to reintroduce anti-Semitic legislation, for example, or instances of organized persecution against people of Jewish heritage. Other national minorities, such as the Gypsies or even homosexuals, live in much greater danger. (See story on page 6.)

Jew-hatred is now directed against an abstract image of "Jewishness," rather than living, flesh-and-blood Jews. "If there weren't any Jews at all," Jean-Paul Sartre once wrote, "the anti-Semite would invent them."

Beneath its traditional guises, the focus of the new anti-Semitism is the West and those who represent its secular ideologies and modern values. In the same way Soviets used to rail against "Zionism" and "Freemasonry," "the Jews" today are vilified as the agents of Western ideas, lifestyles and economic forms. "The Jews" or "Jewishness" are euphemisms for the "imported," "foreign" values that right-wing nationalist forces oppose, such as political pluralism, international law, human rights, European integration and the free market. From Moscow to Bratislava, nationalists draw upon anti-Semitism to express their opposition to European democra-

cy in its broadest sense.

The contemporary anti-Semite is also the racist, the homophobe, the conservative cleric, the provincial nationalist—and, of course, the potential fascist, a personality type that can hate a people who no longer exist.

Today's anti-Semitism is intricately bound with the legacy of communism. Communists of Jewish origin played top roles in the orthodox Stalinist regimes of the postwar period. Though most Jews were not communists, the visibility of Jews in the hard-line regimes earned them the reputation as the Kremlin's loyal servants. Their high profile and unpopularity enabled Stalin to make Jews the scapegoats for the excesses of Stalinism. With the notorious purges of the '50s, anti-Semitism became a standard way for communist governments to stabilize their shaky power bases. Under the cloak of "anti-Zionism," the leaderships repackaged prewar stereotypes of the "rootless world Jewry" and "international Jewish plots."

Thus, after the democratic revolutions of 1989, the apparatchiks-turned-nationalists immediately shifted the blame for communism to the Jews, just as they had castigated them as the "agents of Western imperialism" only months before.

As nationalism swelled and economic conditions worsened, deep-seated historical antipathies to the West and liberalism surfaced. Nationalists today speak of "Jewish communism" and "Jewish liberalism" in the same breath, castigating both as foreign ideologies imposed upon their nation from outside. The two ideologies, though on opposite sides of the Cold War, share Enlightenment attitudes toward progress and internationalism that are strikingly at odds with East European nationalism. They hold that the West, like communism, wants to rob their nation of its unique identity.



This Nazi poster is 56 years old. But hatred for the "eternal Jew" remains strong.

Whatever nationalists may say, the bottom line of their anti-Western rhetoric is the rejection of the democratic principles associated with a united Europe. These principles, such as the respect for minority rights, indeed curtail the power of individual governments. They limit, for example, their leeway to rig elections, suppress opposition parties or persecute national minorities. For nationalists, these are "cosmopolitan," "urban," "anti-national" (Jewish) values—all infringements upon their national sovereignty.

In Romania, leading ultra-nationalists none other than the communist regime's former henchmen portray capitalism as a dark, international Jewish plot to "turn Romanians into the slaves of the West." The Jew is the hidden, destructive force, the "invisible hand" of market forces.

For ordinary people, recourse to a "Jewish plot" is an easy way to grasp complex processes. Like communist propaganda, it claims to explain everything and is always right. What, for example, could be more unfathomable to an East European peasant than the workings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF)? The IMF is an international, capitalist institution that has set his country strict austerity guidelines. The average person cannot see, appeal to or hope to combat the IMF. It dwells somewhere beyond the reach of mere human beings, making decisions in far-away Western offices that adversely affect people's lives.

Compare the role of the IMF in Eastern Europe with Hannah Arendt's description of traditional European stereotypes of Jews: "We find the Jews always represented as an international trade organization, a worldwide family concern with identical interests everywhere, a secret force behind the throne that degrades all visible governments into mere facade, or into marionettes whose strings are manipulated behind the scenes. Because of their close relationship to state sources of power, the Jews were invariably identified with power, and because of their aloofness from society and concentration upon the closed circle of the family, they were invariably suspected of working for the destruction of all social structures."

The IMF possesses all the insidious characteristics of the "Jewish world conspiracy." The nationalist press across Eastern Europe portrays the IMF as a "Judeo-Bolshevik"

scheme. According to the Bucharest weekly *Europa*, the "Israeli-backed" IMF wants to "transform the Romanian people into cesspit cleaners, dog-catchers, refuse collectors and porters, serving individuals who are foreigners to the nation and to the country."

So far, right-wing politicians armed with anti-Semitic rhetoric have been unable to sway significant constituencies with this tool alone. But other, less flagrantly anti-Semitic parties have openly vied, and even captured, political power. In the 1990 election in Hungary, for example, which put the national conservative Hungarian Democratic Forum (HDF) into government, the HDF's populist right wing appealed to anti-Semitism in their attacks against the liberal Alliance of Free Democrats. In the first round of the Polish presidential election later that year, Lech Walesa opportunistically pandered to rumors that his top opponent, the liberal Catholic intellectual Tadeusz Mazowiecki, was a Jew. Though anti-Semitism was not the determining factor in either race, the HDF and Walesa, both winners, made certain that they had the anti-Semites in their camp.

According to surveys, the anti-Semite tends to be older, less educated and more often from the country than non-anti-Semites. His reactions are triggered by fear and anxiety, envy and spite, resentment and ignorance. He would gladly have a strong, authoritarian leader rule the country. He respects power, follows orders and proudly shows allegiance.

Polish critic Adam Michnik, comparing Poland and France, notes that "whenever the shadow of anti-Semitism arose in public life in the past, it was an unmistakable signal that people with anti-democratic, intolerant views were on the political offensive. Today, when anti-Semitic opinions are expressed in Poland, Jews are not the issue. The question is whether or not there will be a Polish democracy."

Michnik is right, and anti-Semitism is sending a signal the West should heed. The insensitive and negligent policies of Western Europe and the U.S. toward the new democracies in the East have squandered much of the plentiful goodwill that existed in 1989. The IMF's shock therapy policies have buoyed the fortunes of right-wing and pseudo-left populists in almost every country. Recently, the European Community further restricted Central and East Europeans' trade access to critical markets. Foreign investment has proven but a trickle of that initially promised.

East Europeans are all too aware that the West has unfailingly abandoned them in their moment of crisis. Thus their patience is short, and many people are easily swayed by the voice of undemocratic, anti-Western alternatives. In the absence of a progressive left, the nationalists reap the fallout from disillusionment with the economic transformation.

It is time that the real democratic forces in those countries rethink their blind loyalty to radical free-market policies. Since capitalism and democracy are inextricably bound in the minds of Eastern Europeans, the failure of the one implies the failure of the other.

I N T H E A R T S

Bazooka Joe

L

ast night I was watching television—Deep Space Nine was repelling an alien hijacker from its computer—when the scene shifted, via commercial, to an American city circa today. A man appeared on the screen and launched a shoulder-mounted rocket into a street construction project. It blew up good, as they used to say on the SCTV movie/farm report.

Then the narrator asked: “Don’t you want to do this?” The man who had launched the rocket—Michael Douglas disguised as H. Ross Perot, it appeared—then socked a loudmouthed motorist, took a baseball bat to a Korean-owned grocery store, machine-gunned a pay telephone and demanded and got, Uzi in hand, breakfast from Whammyburger at 11:35 (“We stop serving breakfast at 11:30”). The narrator returned to say, “On February 26, Bill Foster will do what you always wanted to.”

In Falling Down, a fed-up regular guy goes ballistic—literally. But what’s the film’s message?

By Pat Dowell

This commercial for the new film *Falling Down* homes in on what Warner Bros. thinks is its real appeal. Director Joel Schumacher’s movie studies a spooked Los Angeles commuter who flees the anxieties of the freeway on foot for a perilous journey, complete with escalating weaponry, through the city’s ethnic and class hostilities.

The commercial suggests America is in for a crowd-pleasing domestic Rambo romp. But *Falling Down* is far more than that. It is, in fact, a conflicted nihilist comedy about the crackup of the middle class—though no one may notice that amid all the firefights. *Falling Down* starts out as *Thelma and Louise*, with the Douglas character a hero pursued by the demons of urban living. But it ends up as *The Creature from the Black (make that White) Lagoon*, with a monstrous Douglas threatening to destroy that current holy of holies, the family. “I’m the bad guy?” he muses, blinking into the sun on the Venice pier in the

movie’s final moments. “How did that happen? I did everything they told me to.”

Ironically, unabashedly exploitative as the television commercials are, they humanize the white-collar berserker played by Douglas—in the movie he is known only by his “personalized” license plates, D-FENS. The name is a reference, presumably, to the job he has recently lost, as a worker at a defense plant called, amusingly, Notech.

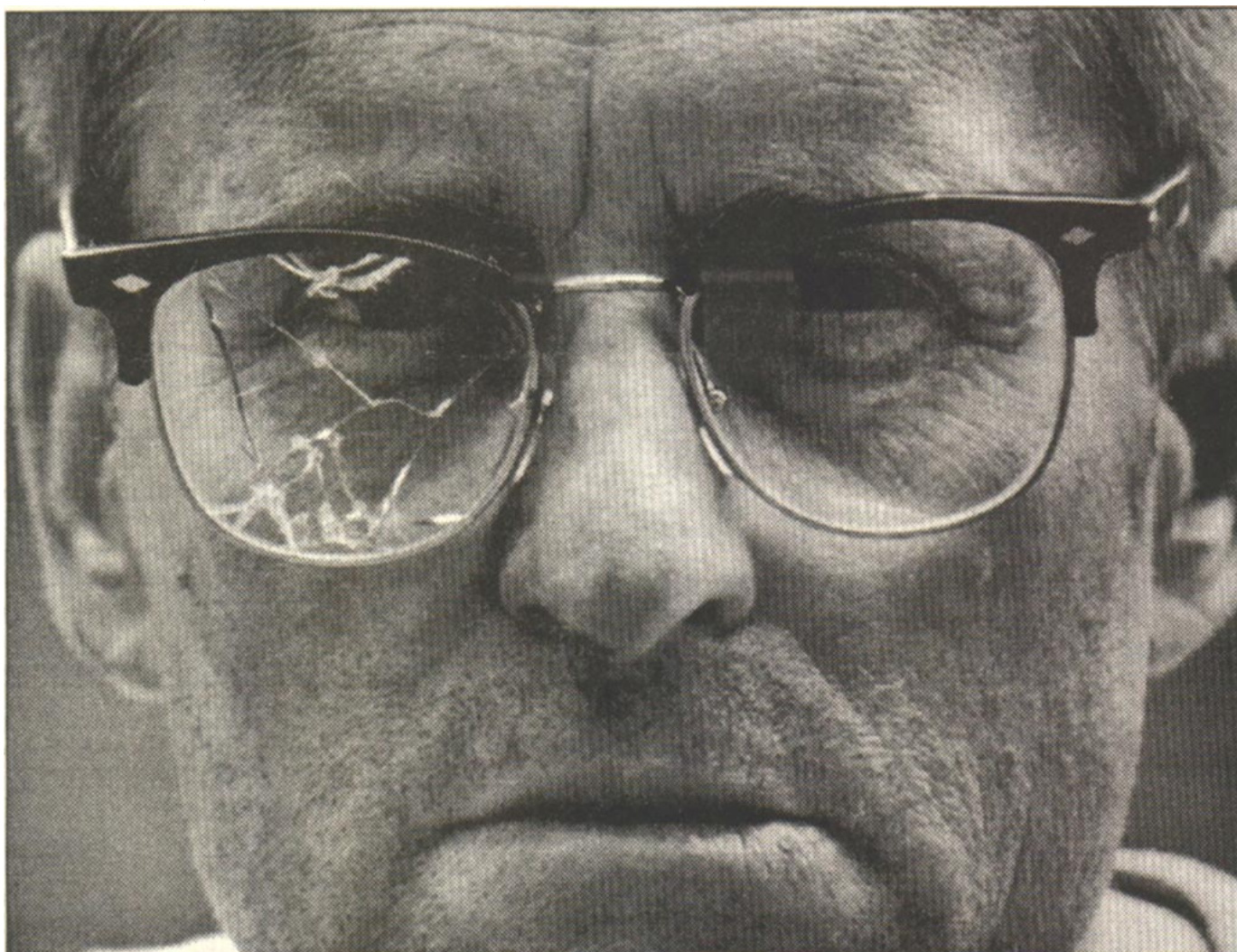
The movie also calculatedly takes some pains to distance itself morally from the character whose exploits are its chief box-office draw. His only admirer turns out to be the neo-Nazi owner of an army surplus store whose proudest possession is an empty canister of Zyklon-B, the chemical used in Hitler’s gas chambers. This is the only character D-FENS kills by his own hand, horrified at the man’s camaraderie. But before he dies, this aging skinhead (Frederic Forrest) bestows on D-FENS his niftiest tool, a bazooka, which D-FENS then uses to bully a road crew. (So much for rebuilding the infrastructure.)

Ebbe Roe Smith’s script, occasionally brilliant and often evasive, also lets us know early on that D-FENS is not quite an ordinary Joe. We’re led to understand that he’s on his way home to his daughter’s birthday party, but it soon



© 1993 Warner Bros.

Falling Down
Directed by
Joel Schumacher



© 1993 Warner Bros.

becomes clear that there's a restraining order to keep him away from his ex-wife (Barbara Hershey). The cop who is tracking him (Robert Duvall) senses immediately that in D-FENS' armageddon it will be women and children first.

Falling Down tries hard to be egalitarian in its paranoia. D-FENS works his way up through the city's neighborhoods onto a country club golf course where he shotguns an elderly snob's golf cart. But curiously, the movie is not an equal-opportunity exploiter. In what seems a calculated omission, D-FENS never tangles with any African-American Angelenos. Could it be that this prospect seemed overly incendiary to a studio that found its location shooting for this film interrupted by the riots?

It's that kind of commercial streamlining that keeps *Falling Down* from becoming more than a fascinating sociological artifact. For all its ambition—and I think it is not merely a Pat Buchanan wet dream—*Falling Down* is like too much Hollywood "product," as the industry refers to movies. It doesn't want to alienate any potential audience.

So (unlike a genuinely fascist movie might) it tries to compensate for possible offenses. The Korean grocer is a grimy sleazeball, but then D-FENS is a nutcase. Robert Duvall's wife is a slatternly nag, but then his partner is a

sharp, beautiful and supportive Chicana. Relentlessly personalized, the social comments tend to cancel each other out, according to what characters you're supposed to like or dislike; all that's left is an experience, not an insight.

One minor incident in the movie comes close, however, to getting at culprits who are further up the food chain than armed teenagers and retail predators. D-FENS stops to stare at a protestor picketing solo in front of a bank. His placard reads "I'm not economically viable." That was the bank's explanation for denying him a loan, and, as the young African-American is carted off in a police car, he and D-FENS lock eyes for a slow-motion moment of truth. D-FENS recognizes that line of Wall Street babble as his own epitaph, the macro-economic way of sweeping him and millions like him under the rug.

D-FENS can't get at the robber barons, so he settles for targets closer to hand. This displacement is the source of his tragedy—too important a fact to be so deeply buried in the film. But, for all its faults, *Falling Down* is a pungent sourball to all the treacle that flows from Hollywood. We need reminders of that vital Situationist precept, scrawled on the walls of the Sorbonne in 1968 and still true today, that the real state secret is the misery of everyday life. ◀

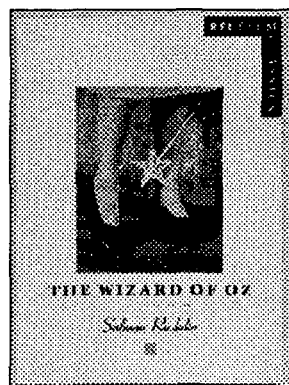
I N P R I N T

Exiled in Oz

By Ilan Stavans

Dorothy Gale, the heroine of *The Wizard of Oz*, like Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland, has come to symbolize a girl's search for happiness beyond the confines of home—through a bizarre rite of passage where the world acquires meaning through distortions of its size and limits. The plight of these two characters involves both revelation and purification: they overcome the sorrows of daily life by traveling beyond the boundaries of their immediate surroundings to an abstract geography few adults can enter; they return home possessed of a crucial inner truth. In this tiny but enlightening volume (part of the British Film Institute Film Classics series), Salman Rushdie, the London-based author, now in hiding, of *Midnight's Children* and *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, applies his considerable critical talents to the 1939 film version of *The Wizard of Oz*.

After first seeing the film in Bombay at the age of 10, he never forgot it: his very first story, *Over the Rainbow*, now lost, was written in 1957 under



The Wizard of Oz
By Salman Rushdie
The British Film Institute
69 pp., \$9.95

the influence of that cinematic experience. As a result of the film's enchantments, he began to perceive his father, Anis Ahmed Rushdie, as himself a wizard of sorts—an inspiring storyteller, magical but prone to explosive rages. Rushdie's own journey on the Yellow Brick Road, from India to England to the underground existence imposed on him by the Ayatollah Khomeini's death threat, is really not unlike that of Dorothy's: the two are voyagers, exiles, whose fortunes depend on miracles rather than on good action. The difference, of course, is that Rushdie is banished from Kansas forever.

This February 14 marked four years since *The Satanic Verses* ignited the worldwide controversy that forced Rushdie underground. Since then two of his translators have been assaulted, one killed. Governmental response has been weak. The British government has resumed diplomatic relations with Iran; the Bush administration simply ignored Rushdie's suffering. Attempts to reach a compromise with Muslim leaders have been unsuccessful; various other avenues to help him out of his labyrinth have failed. Rushdie seems to have become a casualty of the fractious multicultural milieu in which we live. To most people, he is no longer a human being but a symbol of the contradictions between religious dogmatism and civil rights.

To keep himself afloat, Rushdie has refused to give up writing. Since vanishing from the public eye he has published a treaty on tolerance, a number of short stories, a children's book and this study of *The Wizard of Oz*. Truth is, it's hard to read him without being distracted by his political plight. Though presented as literature, his books are invariably maps of his misfortune. And indeed, most will be tempted to see Dorothy's adventure in this exegetical volume as a parable of Rushdie's own life.

The book is comprised of two sections, a powerful autobiographical essay titled "A Short Text About Magic," in which Rushdie discusses the value of Victor Fleming's film version of L. Frank Baum's tale, and a forgettable short story, "At the Auction of the Ruby Slippers," about the day when Dorothy's red shoes were knocked down to \$15,000 at a sale of MGM props. His examination of *The Wizard of Oz* is full of a child's love for the colors and surprises of the imagination: Rushdie writes as a fan, enamored of the movie's photography and scenery, intrigued by the multiple rumors surrounding its production and post-production; he is also a careful observer of the many, often contradictory innuendos of the screenplay. (His views draw heavily on Aljean Harmetz' 1989 *The Making of The Wizard of Oz*.)

Rushdie's passion notwithstanding, the book isn't free of criticism. He sees the ending of the film as essentially incoherent: if the story is about the wonderful land of Oz, why does the film conclude with the message that "There's no place like home"? Rushdie's interpretation does without this last section; he's less concerned with the comfort and security of home than he is with Dorothy's redemption through exile.

"Oz finally *became* home," Rushdie concludes, "the

imagined world became the actual world, as it does for us all, because the truth is that once we have left our childhood places and started out to make up our lives, armed only with what we have and are, we understand that the real secret of the ruby slippers is not that 'there's no place like home,' but rather that there is no longer any such place as home: except, of course, for the home we make, or the homes that are made for us, in Oz: which is anywhere, and everywhere, except the place from which we began."

The message is clear: Rushdie has been left out in the cold, wandering from one shelter to the next. When the scandal surrounding *The Satanic Verses* erupted, the public was angered; but time has turned outrage to complacency. Dorothy Gale went to Oz to find light; Rushdie's travels to the West submerged him in a darkness without redemption. He is now alone in a universe where silence (yours and mine) reigns and where the late Ayatollah Khomeini, thunderously dead, orchestrated a coup d'état that overthrew the Wizard. Rushdie's *Wizard of Oz* is both an illuminating study of the film and the unanswered plea of a prisoner seemingly condemned to oblivion. ◀

Man Stavans, a Mexican novelist and critic, is finishing *The Stranger Within*, a volume of reflections on Hispanic culture in the U.S., due out in 1994 by HarperCollins. He is the recipient of the 1992 Latino Literature Prize.

Apocalypse then

By Patrick M. Quinn

In the early morning hours of August 29, 1970, a massive explosion demolished a good portion of Sterling Hall, the building that housed the physics department at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, killing Robert Fassnacht, a post-doctoral student, and injuring several others. The explosion was the work of the "New Year's Gang," a group of four young Madison radicals who had concluded that the failure of the anti-war movement to end the war required them to take more decisive action. Eventually three of the four were captured by the police, convicted and sentenced to prison terms. The fourth eluded capture, disappeared and remains free today.

Tom Bates' *Rads* is the story of the origins and evolution of the New Year's Gang, their flight from Madison and the efforts of the FBI and Madison police to identify and seize them. Bates, who earned a Ph.D. in history at Wisconsin during the '60s and later turned to journalism, unfortunately presents the story as a sensationalized melodrama,

approaching his subject as if he were chronicling the exploits of Charles Manson. Bates obviously did considerable research for this book, but little of it shows: there are no footnotes, no bibliography, nor even a brief mention of sources. (He seems to draw most heavily on interviews with retired cops, FBI agents, undercover agents and the like.) Bates' account suffers from a surfeit of clichés and from a too diligent, though not always accurate, recounting of minutiae.

Yet these are minor matters in contrast to what makes this a really bad book. Like many retrospective commentators on the '60s, Bates elevates a relatively small segment of the anti-war movement—the ultra-left component—into the movement itself.

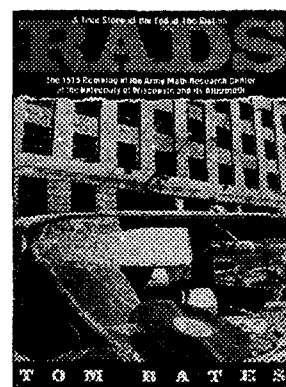
To be sure, as the war dragged on, frustration increased among a sector of student anti-war activists, who became attracted to the simplistic, romanticized Maoism that came to the fore with the breakup of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). In Madison these activists turned to the propaganda of the deed, trashing local stores as "prime imperialist targets" instead of organizing to build the anti-war movement among a wider population. Indeed, it was the politics of frustration that caused the four members of the New Year's Gang to engage in the colossally foolish ultra-left venture of blowing up Sterling Hall.

But instead of attempting to understand the actions of the New Year's Gang in the context of SDS's collapse into Maoism, Bates turns to pop psychology, describing the political pathologies of the gang's leader as the result of his having been abused as a child by his father. This kind of reductionism is typical of those who have attempted to explain the '60s in psychological, rather than political, terms.

Bates tells us that the Sterling Hall bombing destroyed the anti-war movement in Madison. There's no question that the bombing proved to be a very serious setback, one from which the movement never completely recovered.

But there was more to the movement than the New Year's Gang: In April 1971, less than a year after the bombing, some 66 percent of the Madison electorate voted in a local referendum for the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Vietnam. By ignoring the influence of the broader anti-war movement, Bates has given his story an ending more fitting to melodrama than to history. ◀

Patrick M. Quinn was an anti-war activist in Madison in the '60s.



**Rads: The 1970
Bombing of the Army
Math Research Center at
the University of Wis-
consin and Its Aftermath**
By Tom Bates
HarperCollins
448 pp., \$25

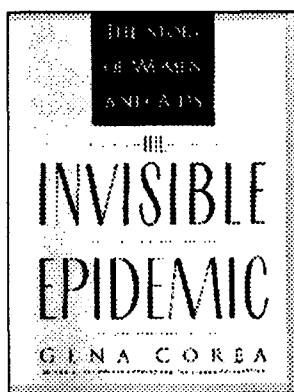
Invisible Women

By Eleanor J. Bader

AIDS, warns the poster, doesn't discriminate. We know this. Yet, when it is time for most of us to conjure up pictures of the women who have been affected by this pandemic, only two images come readily to mind: the drug addict and the streetwalker.

Gena Corea's *The Invisible Epidemic* breaks through these stereotypes. Her probing journalism not only introduces the reader to a range of women infected by the HIV virus, but looks at the ways in which government agencies, the media and the medical establishment have ignored the realities of women with AIDS. Moving chronologically through the '80s, she describes the social and political factors that have rendered HIV-positive women invisible.

Women have long been kept from positions of power and influence in the medical profession; for years, Corea



**The Invisible Epidemic:
The Story of Women
and AIDS**

By Gena Corea
HarperCollins
356 pp., \$23

argues, "men [have] fought hard to keep the female 'other' out of medicine entirely." In the case of AIDS, the male-dominated profession has been remarkably insensitive to the concerns and the experience (not to mention the plight) of women.

In the earliest years of the pandemic, the blindness to women's experience meant that women's symptoms were not differentiated from men's. Though an unprecedented number of women—young women—were dying of respiratory failure, cervical cancer and pneumonia, these diseases, and these deaths, were never linked to HIV status. Women with such illnesses were not even

tested for HIV. Letters in medical journals in the early '80s went so far as to argue that women could not get AIDS, that it could only be transmitted homosexually, by men.

Luckily, a number of individual doctors and health care workers began to challenge the official medical establish-

ment line, documenting their experiences with women they suspected were dying of AIDS, sharing the information with each other.

These activists began to notice a disturbing pattern: when women were acknowledged as being affected by AIDS, it was "simply as vectors of the disease to men and fetuses, as organisms, like insects, that transmit a pathogen. Women were discussed in perinatal and prostitute studies: Those innocent babies getting [AIDS] from those irresponsible moms. Those bad women in prostitution giving it not only to innocent men—the johns—but to 'good' women, the johns' wives."

Equally troubling were the actions of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), which hampered women's treatment options by excluding gynecological conditions from the AIDS surveillance definition. "[W]ho knew," Corea comments acidly, "what was going on in vaginas, uteri, and ovaries?" As a result of the CDC's limited definition, the official AIDS count included only 569 women nationwide in 1985. Yet one of the women Corea interviews, Chaplain Eileen Hogan, estimated that in the early '80s over half the women at New York's Riker's Island prison had the disease.

Since the experiences of women infected with HIV seemed to have vanished into a conceptual black hole, activists like Hogan began to check into other aspects of AIDS treatment and experimentation. They discovered that Azidothymidine (AZT), a drug known to slow the progress of AIDS in men, was not tested on women in the early trials, and even recently the medical community's fears about AZT's potential impact on future pregnancies has limited testing to a tiny number of women. The focus of AZT testing in women, they discovered, has been exclusively on fetal development; an assessment of AZT's usefulness in treating gynecological problems has yet to be done.

Indeed, women with AIDS stand a good chance of dying without ever being diagnosed with having the disease—treated, if at all, by gyn technicians who are inadequately trained in HIV. (The fragmentation of medical care often results in little or no communication between hospital gyn and HIV-clinic personnel.) And that's not even considering the problem of money: In many cases women have been denied Social Security disability and Supplemental Security Income—the major sources of government funding for those too ill to work—because the CDC definition excluded their symptoms as manifestations of AIDS.

Corea spotlights the efforts of feminist health workers and activists—ACT-UP women in particular—in confronting the intertwined problems of sexism, racism, classism and homophobia in medical care. By interviewing a variety of women—from prostitutes to doctors, from drug addicts to community organizers—she helps to personalize a public health crisis that is too often discussed in abstract, sanitized terms. Short on rhetoric and long on facts, *The Invisible Epidemic* is an organizing tool of incalculable value.

Eleanor J. Bader writes regularly for *In These Times*.

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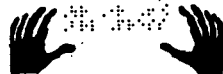
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tions of constructing power plants on the moon, saying such a move would be at least 10 years down the road anyway.

Not feeling sure the Japanese government would nix the project, nor being confident Japan's scientists would fail in their quest, I decided to find out if there's a law forbidding such an endeavor.

I reached a woman in the United Nations press office and asked her about the moon treaty. "I really have no idea about that," she said. "You'll have to speak to the people in Outer Space." She transferred my call.

The fellow in Outer Space (more formally known as the Outer Space Division) informed me that the "moon treaty is not signed by too many countries." In fact, only 13 have signed or ratified the treaty, which was adopted by the U.N. General Assembly in December 1979 and entered into force in July 1984. The signatories are Austria, Australia, Chile, the Netherlands, Pakistan, the Philippines, Uruguay, France, Romania, Peru, Guatemala, India and Morocco. They're a fairly diverse bunch—though few have distinguished themselves with their space programs. Japan and the United States, you might not be surprised to learn, have not signed the treaty.

He then faxed me the "Agreement Governing the Activities of States on

the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies" so I could see for myself why it has so few fans.

Here are some features of the moon treaty you may not be aware of:

- "State parties shall promptly inform the secretary general ... of any indication of organic life."

- "State parties ... shall regard any person on the moon as an astronaut."

- "State parties shall offer shelter in their stations, installations, vehicles and other facilities to persons in distress on the moon."

Not much to object to there, right?

But the treaty says the moon is "the common heritage of mankind," shall be used "exclusively for peaceful purposes," and "is not subject to national appropriation." No wonder so few countries have signed the pact. What good is the final frontier if you can't occupy it?

The treaty also forbids military installations and weapons testing, requires measures to prevent environmental contamination, and demands that the secretary general be told in advance if somebody wants to take radioactive material up there.

The treaty says there "shall be freedom of scientific investigation on the moon by all," but doesn't rule out exploitation of the moon's natural resources. However, it states that the "use" of the moon "shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interests

of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development." That must have been the last straw for the winner of the Cold War and its chief combatant in the Trade War.

I haven't bothered to call Outer Space for further clarification. But it appears to me that even if Japan was a signatory, the treaty would not necessarily prohibit Tokyo from setting up its glow factory amid the moon glow. And though I'm no scientist, it seems a fair assumption that establishing an orbiting Three Mile Island on our closest celestial neighbor epitomizes the word "lunacy."

But perhaps I'm being too Eurocentric about this. In Japan, the moon is said to be associated not with madness, but with wisdom. The Buddha, after all, became enlightened under a full moon. So perhaps our best hope is for Japanese policy-makers to spend a lot of time practicing *tsukimi*—moon-watching—in the next few years. Maybe some of that mythic wisdom will wear off.

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IN THE END

Lunacy!

By Robin Epstein

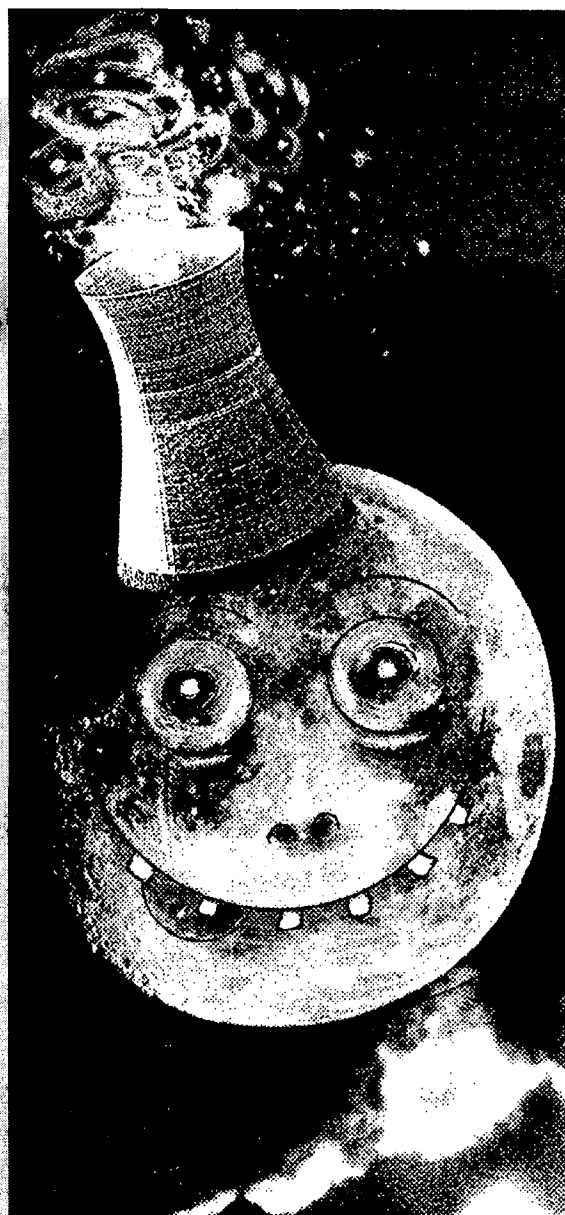
PLANET EARTH—The moon has long been associated with insanity. The very word “lunatic” derives from the Latin word *luna*, or moon. Lycanthropy—werewolfism—is a horrifying example of the moon’s alleged power to corrupt the brain. But the latest example of moon madness is even more frightening. Japanese researchers have asked the government for funding to study the feasibility of putting a nuclear power plant on the moon.

I was intrigued by a two-inch wire service story on this subject that appeared in the *Chicago Tribune* last month. According to the article, Japan’s Science and Technology Agency wants to spend five years developing a converter that can change energy generated by nuclear power plants on the moon into electricity that would then be transmitted to Earth.

Disturbed by Japan’s current policy of endangering the seas by importing plutonium via boat (see *In These Times*, Nov. 30, 1992), I decided to investigate the moon-nuke scheme. But when asked for more details, Yukihide Hayashi, a science officer at the Japanese Embassy in Washington, D.C., was stumped. “I wonder who said such kinds of things. We have lots of projects about nuclear development but I didn’t know about developing a nuclear power plant on the moon,” he said. “That would be a very big project. I have to talk with a Tokyo person about this matter.”

A few days later Hayashi’s embassy colleague, Kimikazu Iwase, came up with a few tidbits of information. The project would be “theory-type research,” he said. “Some of the researchers are very creative. They will get more creative

Our correspondent has a cow (the kind that jumped over the moon) about a Japanese plan to put a nuclear plant on the Earth’s nearest celestial neighbor.



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than usual when trying to sell a project.”

“We’re just talking about dreams,” he said. “It’s not decided yet.” The Japanese government will make a decision on the funding request sometime this spring, he said.

Iwase then mentioned the troublesome “squeeze factor,” which, along with the dearth of fossil fuels, hinders Japan’s ability to supply its own power. “In Japan we don’t have enough land to build power generating plants. I’m guessing (the researchers) may be thinking about utilizing the land on the moon’s surface.”

He didn’t mention the small but growing anti-nuclear movement in Japan. But that movement’s ability to hinder future Japanese nuclear projects—at least those within this stratosphere—shouldn’t be underestimated. Approximately 10 plants are currently under construction in Japan, he said.

Iwase refused to comment on the geopolitical ramifications.

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